

NOTES
ON THE
WEST INDIES:
WRITTEN DURING THE
EXPEDITION UNDER THE COMMAND
OF THE LATE
GENERAL SIR RALPH ABERCROMBY :
INCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ON
THE ISLAND OF BARBADOES,
AND THE SETTLEMENTS CAPTURED BY THE BRITISH TROOPS, UPON
THE COAST OF GUIANA ;
LIKEWISE REMARKS RELATING TO THE
CREOLES AND SLAVES OF THE WESTERN COLONIES; AND
THE INDIANS OF SOUTH AMERICA :
WITH OCCASIONAL HINTS, REGARDING
The Seasoning, or Yellow Fever
OF HOT CLIMATES.

By GEORGE PINCKARD, M. D.
OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS,
DEPUTY INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF HOSPITALS TO HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES,
AND PHYSICIAN TO THE BLOOMSBURY DISPENSARY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

It is a strange thing that in sea-voyages, where there is nothing to be seene, but sky and sea, men should make diaries; but in land trauaile, wherein so much is to be obserued, for the most part they omit it; as if chance were fitter to be registered than obseruation.

LORD VERULAM.

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VOL. II.

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— 120, — 15, *insert it after of*

— 306, — 18, *for William Frederic read St. Andrew*

— 313, — 1, *for William Frederic read St. Andrew*

— 316, — 21, *for William Frederic read St. Andrew*

— 345, — 4, *for William Frederic read St. Andrew*

— 363, — 6, *dele the comma after lion, and insert it after monkey*

VOL. III.

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LETTER I.

Author apprehensive of having wearied his friend with the detail of his river excursion. Report of the sick-list during his absence. A valuable and friendly compagnon de voyage. Some remarks on down and feathers. Author and his friends besieged with interrogatories. Happy tidings from Grenada and St. Vincent. Improbable report of the commander in chief proceeding against Guadaloupe. Capture of Sir Sidney Smith by the French. Corps of South American Rangers. A large snake. Mermaids.

Berbishe, July.

I AM too sensible, my friend, that in my last noting communication I suffered myself to be led into minutiae, regarding our late excursion, which might be more tedious than entertaining to you: but as my pen was my companion in the deep woods, and as I thought to you, while noting each circumstance on the spot, where it occurred, I afterwards knew not what part to suppress, and therefore hazarded a severe trial of your patience by imposing upon you the task of perusing the whole; yet not without a hope that, as the mode of travelling, and every thing connecting with the excursion, differed, tota facie, from what

is common in Europe, the novelty might in some measure compensate the wearisome detail

It will give you much pleasure to learn that the hospital list had not been augmented during my absence, and that the troops in this colony still continue even more healthy, than our best expectations had led us to hope.

You know my attachment to the friendly little mattress, which I brought from England as my *compagnon de voyage*, and you will believe that its value has not been diminished by my often finding it the soothing associate of my toils. Never were its calm affusions more eagerly embraced, nor more gratefully enjoyed than on the evening of my return from our tour. After passing three distressful nights in an open hammock, assailed with the bites and stings of whole tribes of insects, I extended my person, at ease, on my kindly mattress, and, shielded by my canopy, and curtains of gauze, bade defiance to the buzzing hosts which thirsted for my blood. The power of lying undisturbed, and of extending my swollen and wearied limbs unmolested, was quite a conquest; and, perhaps, but few things, even of greater moment, ever brought such real

comfort, such unalloyed enjoyment to any individual as I experienced from this trivial circumstance. You will form some judgment of it, when I tell you that I had been bitten from head to foot by insects, and had been exposed to the fatigue of four days travelling in a scorching climate, besides passing three successive nights, not only without sleep, but hung up in an open hammock, with my tortured, tumefied, and itching body exposed to the bites and stings of new assailants.

The great and happy change I felt, so occupied my contemplations, that for a time, I resisted the invitations of Morpheus, and lay in quiet watchfulness to observe the enraged thousands, that beat their wings in disappointment against the defending barrier of my couch.

In truth may I say that I afterwards reposed, throughout the night, in sweet and balmy sleep, and that I rose in the morning with increased affection for my friendly mattress : figuratively speaking it was a bed of the softest down ! You already know that a real bed of down would have had no charms in my estimation. Indeed my increasing experience

confirms the surprize you have often heard me express, that such multitudes of persons should have adopted the pernicious custom of exhausting their strength, by passing long nights buried in the unwholesome heat of down and feathers.

You will readily conceive the avidity with which our comrades demanded an account of our excursion and adventures. They crowded round us upon our arrival, besieging us with volleys of interrogatories, and eagerly listening to our recitals. Every one had something new to ask, and from the varied forms of nearly similar questions, the two or three first days were mostly spent in repeating the details of our journey.

We, on our part, were equally solicitous to learn the news of the Islands and of England, but were disappointed in all our inquiries, no intelligence having reached the colony during our absence. Since our return a vessel has arrived from Barbadoes, with the happy tidings that our troops have subdued the Brigands and the Charibs of Grenada and St. Vincent, and that these islands are restored to order and tranquillity. It is further added that

the commander in chief is gone with the army against Guadaloupe; but this we regard only as the idle rumour of the hour, for when we consider the very advanced period of the season, and that the troops have been already fatigued and reduced in number, by the campaign in the other islands, and by furnishing these with the necessary garrisons, it does not seem probable that an attack can be meditated, this season, upon the enemy's strongest position.

From the kind attentions of our hospitable and friendly neighbour Mr. Blair, we have now before us a series of English newspapers up to May 12th. You already know that the perusal of these is one of our highest enjoyments—one of our greatest sources of delight. Not a sentence, nor a word escapes us. We read with great concern the unfortunate defeat of our brave allies the Austrians, and we much apprehend that this event will remove every prospect of peace for the present.

We are also much grieved to read that the gallant Sir Sidney Smith is captured by the enemy: for we are not without our fears, that, from the nature of the enterprize in which

he was engaged, he may become the victim of revolutionary rage ; or, that the sanguinary rulers who have usurped the government in France, not possessing that magnanimity of mind which honors the enterprising valour of an enemy, but being meanly exasperated by his intrepidity, may subject him to hardships unknown to ordinary captives.

From Demarara we learn that it is in contemplation to form a corps of negroes for the defence of the colony, to consist of 350 or 400 men, and to be denominated the "South American rangers." Should this plan be put into execution, it will, probably, open a field of promotion for the junior officers of the regiments now serving in Guiana ; but it is supposed that most of the companies will be given to such of the planters who shall volunteer their services ; in order to create a colonial spirit in the corps, and to strengthen it as much as possible with local interest. A body of troops thus constituted would form, perhaps, the best and most disposable force, that could be established for the defence of this coast.

I should not omit telling you that a few days since I had an opportunity of seeing one

of the race of enormous snakes, which you read of as infesting these colonies. It was killed near the town of New Amsterdam,—was twelve feet long, and about the thickness of a man's thigh. To the Europeans who were present, it appeared a very large, and hideous reptile; but neither the colonists, nor the negroes considered it of extraordinary size, for we learn that they are sometimes seen more than twice as large, and upwards of thirty feet in length.

I wish I could relate to you a conversation which I heard at the governor's a few days ago on the subject of mermaids. It was maintained that these lady-like animals, of fabulous note, do really exist in the Berbische river, and I confess that I experienced some surprise, when I heard the governor, who is a sensible and intelligent man, give his sanction to the opinion. Often, it was insisted, *very* often had they been seen; and on my asking the gentlemen who advanced the assertion, if it was by their own eyes, they replied, “no! but repeatedly by Indians, by negroes, and by whites,” and they seemed to think it established beyond a doubt, that these beautiful scaly *poissardes* did actually inhabit the waters of this country.

One of them it was said had been taken alive, by an Indian, who was carrying it to Savonette as a present to Mr. Heynemann ; but from the prejudices of his nation, whose superstition protects these fish-tailed ladies ; the man was compelled, by others of the Indians, to return her to the river, lest the enraged mother should haunt them with every species of ill.

A planter who was present, observing that the officers were still unconfirmed in their faith, added a species of testimony which he seemed to think even the most incredulous could not resist. " Nothing," said he, " is more certain than that mermaids do exist in the rivers of Guiana, for I know a navy officer who has not only seen them alive, but who actually ate of one, which had been cooked and served up for the table." This he considered as " confirmation strong"—but as neither this gentleman nor any of the others had seen or eaten of these fish-ladies themselves, however it might border upon a breach of politeness, it was no contradiction of the assertions made by them, not to be convinced by the same reports, which had confirmed their belief: we therefore assume the liberty of Englishmen, and still continue to doubt !

LETTER II.

Captain Maxwell and the Author, make an excursion to Mynheer Roboloski's. Plantation Zuidwyk. Polite attentions of Mynheer Roboloski. Ceremony of saddling old grey, a favorite steed. Author makes a promenade round the estate. Jealousy a tormenting passion. A West India storm. Afflicting loss of an officer in yellow fever. Remarks upon military funerals. Example of the effect of these solemn obsequies. Diseased appearances. Uncertain symptoms.

Berbische, July 12.

YOU will be surprized to hear of my having already made another river excursion ; but I before mentioned to you that we had intended visiting the estate of Mynheer Roboloski, on our return from M. Heynemann's :—not being able to effect it then, and afterwards receiving a pressing renewal of the invitation by some friends of M. Roboloski, who came to pass a day with the officers at the fort; in company with captain Maxwell, I availed myself of the opportunity of returning with these gentlemen. We dined on our way, at the plantation Zuidwyk—one of the most pleasant and improved spots on the bank of the

river. M. Linde, the gentleman we went to see, was indisposed, but he was inspired with health on seeing a party of unexpected visitors, and he entertained us with all the glad welcome of the colony, most cordially inviting us to prolong our visit.

Zuidwyk is a coffee plantation. It is well cultivated, and rich in fruits.—The house is spacious, and, standing at a pleasant distance from the river, with the ground ornamented and improved, it not only appears respectable, but conveys the idea of importance.

From our delay at Zuidwyk we lost the favorable moment of tide, and, in consequence, had to row three miles against a strong current, which cost the poor slaves four long hours of very severe labour and fatigue.

We were most gladly received by M. Robolofski, who, in his attentions towards us, seemed anxious to rival all the friendly hospitality we had experienced. Every mark of distinction and respect was conferred upon us, and a liberal supply of all the best things of the house and estate was served for our entertainment. When we were at table, slaves

were placed at our elbows to wave lime boughs, in order to defend us from the insects ; and, in the evening, we were set down to cards with two or three negroes burning lime sprigs around us, while others were placed with green branches to chase away the musquitoes, as well as to serve us with copious libations from an adjoining table, which was spread with wine, punch, sangaree, and other rich liqueurs. At going to bed, and at rising, slaves attended us with water for our feet, and were strictly enjoined to kneel down, and wash them : nor were we suffered to encounter *the fatigue* of stooping, nor allowed to wet our hands in so humble an office.

It happened that I expressed a desire to make the tour of the estate, in order to observe its extent and cultivation. The wish scarcely had utterance before orders were given for the favorite horse of M. Roboloski to be brought to the door. I had intended myself a pedestrian ramble, but was not permitted to engage in such "excessive fatigue." Old grey was quickly led out, and appeared before the window ; when the process of putting on the best saddle, "for Mynheer," and arranging the gay trappings became the business of no less than

fix slaves, and occupied them for nearly an hour and half, forming a truly diverting and ludicrous scene. The head, the neck, each side, and the very tail of the animal had its appropriate negro. The bridle, the crupper, every girth and stirrup occupied a separate slave, all hurrying in the full bustle of attentive exertion. At length the ponderous saddle was miserably fixed, and, without attempting to instruct the master or correct the slaves, I mounted upon *the neck* of old grey, and soberly trotted round the plantation. At every angle or turning, I met with a fresh slave who had been stationed there in readiness to run after my horse, and to direct and attend me, whithersoever I might wish to bend my way: but as neither old grey, nor myself, were inclined to advance with great speed, all my running foot-men were able to keep pace with me, so that before I had completed my journey, I had collected quite a host of attendants, and found myself moving amidst a naked and numerous throng.

Together with a natural sprightliness, and vivacity of temper, M. Roboloski is generous and hospitable to an extreme. All that was rare was presented to us while we remained,

besides which numberless offerings were heaped upon us at our departure, and he would have given us more than we could carry away. The whole produce of his house and estate—all he had, his *Wowski* excepted, was at our command. On leaving him he loaded us with fruits, pickles; Tonquin beans, and other good things; and it was with difficulty we prevented him from depriving himself of even the comforts of his home for our accommodation. Towards his slaves he is extremely rigid, and holds them in very strict subjection; but, with the many good qualities he possesses, it cannot be suspected that cruelty has any share in his government. Unhappily, with the most liberal and generous nature, he has an unfortunate disposition that torments him with all the harrowing pangs of a dark and embittering passion. Kind and attentive as he is both to his friends and to strangers, he knows neither peace, nor comfort, whilst they are in the house, from his mind being incessantly tortured with the dread suspicion that a disgusting black woman, whom he keeps as his wife, may be seized with a fit of inconstancy, and share with others those joys he expects her to reserve for him alone. He, therefore, locks her up stairs while his visitors

are with him, and keeps the key of the door in his pocket. To such excess, indeed, does he carry his jealousy, as to employ a young slave in the house, for the express purpose of watching the poor hideous woman's conduct, and reporting to him her every look and action ;—an unhappy and fallacious policy, which can have no other effect, but to distress her, and aggravate his own discomfort.

The day after our return from M. Roboloski's, we witnessed one of the great and awful scenes of a West India climate—one of those convulsions of the weather, which convey the idea of enraged elements warring to reduce all nature again to chaos. It is not easy for any one, who is acquainted only with the soft breezes and showers of Europe, to conceive the terrific grandeur which is sometimes exhibited by a storm within the tropics.

The morning of July 5th was still and serene—the heat of noon excessive—a little before evening the heavens blackened, and the clouds accumulated in dark masses threatening a direful storm. Presently a tearing wind issued forth in impetuous current; awful thunder suddenly opened in dreadful concus-

sion, like the bursting of a thousand cannon ; piercing lightening cut through the gloomy darkness in fiery flashes ; the troubled sea swelled in roaring billows ; and the pouring rain rushed down in destructive streams. All the horrors of a tropical hurricane were, present to our imagination, and increased the fearful solemnity of the scene. At the same moment planks and spars, and pieces of wreck were seen floating into the river, which created the melancholy apprehension that some vessel was cast away, and that the crew were, perhaps at that instant, perishing from the fury of the storm. Unhappily too our fears were further heightened by the recollection that a Danish ship had sailed from the river only a few hours before, and that probably the men who had so lately been with us, were now becoming the lifeless inhabitants of the deep. However deplorable their situation, we had no possible means either of ascertaining the fact, or administering relief ; you will therefore imagine the cruel suspense and agitation we must have suffered. As soon as the extreme violence of the storm had abated, numerous parties of the soldiers stripped and swam into the river, to collect the too copious offerings brought by the boisterous waves. They

found the surface of the water strewn with empty casks, barrels of flour and of biscuit, tubs of herrings, pieces of linen and woollen cloth, parcels of gloves, and various pieces of wreck: nor was it long before it was discovered that these were verily the produce of the Danish vessel so lately in the harbour, and which we grieved to learn had been driven aground, and lost very near to the mouth of the river. Happily our apprehensions respecting the crew proved to be less correct, than with regard to the vessel—the sugar and coffee perished, but, fortunately, all hands were saved.

Another very grand, but awful and afflicting scene has occurred to our notice in the funeral obsequies of one of our comrades—an officer of artillery, who had suffered an attack of yellow fever, and from exposing himself to fatigue and late hours during his convalescence, brought on a relapse which quickly deprived his country of his services, and us of his society. War-like honors were done to his remains. The funeral was conducted with all the splendid and heart-moving solemnities of a military procession; which forms one of the most awful ceremonies that the

eye or imagination can contemplate ; but under the circumstances of our present situation it is too solemnly impressive to be practised without the risk of injury ; for I have had occasion to remark that, in its effects, it threatens ills beyond the wholesome grief of the moment. The associations arising from the doleful spectacle operate so powerfully upon the minds of those who are timid of disease, as to endanger serious illness. The slow march, with the arms of war inverted—the solemn music—the sallow hollow-sounding drum—and the thrice vollied farewell, added to the common rites of sepulture, augment the distressful feelings natural to the occasion, and beget a saddening melancholy which not only sinks the soul with grief, but reduces the body within the pale of disease ; and hence, although it be a grand and honorable observance, which may be attended with beneficial effects at certain times, or under certain circumstances, it would appear to be too awful and dispiriting to be indiscriminately exhibited on service, particularly in a climate where the body is highly predisposed to sickness, and the mind held in a state of depression from the sudden and multiplied ravages of disease—and where the sense of honor which attaches to the

ceremony is more than counterbalanced by the sad impression that the person who views it may, probably, in the course of only a few hours, be himself the unconscious object of similar parade.

Two of the officers who attended the funeral, although as brave men as ever unsheathed a sword, were thrown into a state of despondency which had nearly cost them their lives. Overwhelmed with grief for the fate of their comrade, and fearfully apprehensive of disease, the solemnity of the ceremony produced a degree of depression from which they had no power of rallying. All their military spirit, and manly firmness were subdued, and under the weight of inconsolable sadness, they were rapidly sinking into a state of sickness, from which they felt hopeless of recovery. One of them, who with the spirit of the lion, possesses the heart of a lamb, being wholly unable to suppress the overflowings of his sorrow, was seen day by day to shed tears, like an infant. Change of place became necessary to their relief. They were accordingly permitted to quit the fort for a time, and happily by diversity of scene, and absence from the grief-aching spot, the dangers which threatened

them were averted, and their usual health and spirits restored.

We had an opportunity of examining the body of our lost officer: and with sorrow I learn that we may expect to meet with frequent occasions for extending this sort of inquiry. The wet season is now declining, and we are led to look for much increase of sickness during the subsequent months.

Not to fatigue you with a minute detail of the appearances, I may briefly observe that in the stomach they have hitherto been uniform, but in the other viscera very uncertain and dissimilar. With respect to the symptoms of the disease, we begin to discover much instability. Either vomiting, low delirium, singultus, or coma, with or without yellowness of the skin, forms the prominent feature—each in its turn seeming to give the character of a distinct malady—but all terminating, within a few days, under the usual appearances assumed by our great common destroyer.

LETTER III.

Medical discussions promoted by Governor Van Battenburg. Author's disappointment with respect to obtaining information from the local experience of the colonial practitioners. Method of cure established by the Dutch at variance with that employed by the English. Author adopts a mode of inquiry respecting the identity of the disease. Finds that the Dutch are treating the remittent—the English the continued, or yellow fever. The Dutch still wedded to opinion regarding the treatment. Case of remittent fever cured by bark. Professional heresy according to the Dutch code. Remarks concerning a medical life. The term doctor a ready passport—like the term brother in masonry. In the West Indies and on service often advantageous. Exemplified in visiting a ship, a regiment, or a plantation. Respected even by the enemy. The employment a duty of humanity. Medical command more absolute than military. Best and happiest reward of a medical life.

Berbische, July.

THE unhappy loss of our comrade, mentioned to you in my last letter, has been productive of much discussion on the subject of yellow fever. The governor is fond of reading medical books, and feels a strong interest regarding the diseases of the troops, and the maladies arising from the climate. He takes great pleasure in bringing professional men together,

and in promoting medical conversations. I gladly avail myself of the advantages to be derived from this propensity, and through the means of Mynheer Van Battenburg have frequent opportunities of hearing the remarks and opinions of the most eminent practitioners in the colony; but I am sorry to observe that I have been much disappointed with regard to the practical information I had hoped to obtain, from the local experience of these gentlemen. They seem to have established one certain faith—one given routine of practice, from which it were heresy to commit the slightest deviation. Emetics and the bark are prescribed in all cases of fever; and they insist upon the peculiar efficacy of these remedies in that species or degree commonly called “yellow fever.” This doctrine, so generally and positively asserted by the Dutch practitioners, is in direct opposition to the experience of the medical officers of our army, who, in this disease, have constantly found emetics injurious, and bark in the early stages useless. I have therefore been at much pains to reconcile the observations with fact; and as the opinions respecting the treatment were so directly at variance, I was anxious to satisfy myself with regard to the identity of the disease; therefore

in order to ascertain, correctly, whether we were treating the same complaint, I requested several of the medical men of the colony to visit the patients in the military hospital; and begged of them to allow me to see some of the sick inhabitants of the town. This proposal being accepted, the cause of the difference of opinion, and of treatment soon became obvious; for it was discovered that while we were contending with the *continued* fever of Europeans but lately arrived, they were prescribing for the *remittent* fever of the colonists. Candour obliged them to admit that the disease in the hospital differed from the fever which they commonly treated; and one of the most eminent of them, who had been as many as twelve years in busy employment in the colony, was even brought to acknowledge that, in the whole course of his practice, he had met with only *five cases* of what he now termed "*genuine yellow fever.*" Yet, like true Batavians, wedded to old habits, they all persisted in the opinion, and unanimously agreed that vomits and bark were the best remedies for a disease which avowedly they had very seldom seen.

One of the persons whom I had the op-

portunity of visiting was the patient of Dr. S. who only now discovered that he had treated but five cases of yellow fever within the period of a dozen years. I found that he was filling this gentleman with bark, per os atque per anum, without assisting it with opium, wine, or any of the other stimulants, or aromatics usually employed: but it was evidently a case of the remittent fever of the country, and probably would have been treated with bark by every medical tyro of the army. The patient, who was certainly very dangerously ill, happily recovered, and although I was of opinion that he might have been cured with even greater facility, by a less quantity of the bark, had it been combined with opium, wine, or the like, still I was indebted to the doctor for the opportunity which this case afforded me of witnessing the very ample and persevering adhibition of this valuable remedy by the Dutch practitioners. So universally do they employ the bark and emetics, in the fevers of this climate, that, upon asking any one of them at our first meeting, what is his mode of cure, I now always anticipate his reply; and in this expectation I have not yet, in any instance, found myself disappointed.

One of the colonial doctors who visited our late comrade, during his short illness, termed his disease a "pituitous fever;" but still he recommended emetics and bark as the cure. Indeed were these remedies as extensively useful, as might be inferred from the opinions of the gentlemen practising in this colony, the crowded contents of our medicine chests might be conveniently reduced to two simple packages of bark and emetic tartar! Perhaps, no medical officer of the army would hesitate to allow that these are very useful remedies in cases of remittent fever, but there are few, I suspect, who would hazard their reputation by asserting that, in the disease known by the name of yellow fever, they can be relied upon as the best curative means. The fact would seem to be that the patients who come under the care of the practitioners of the colony are mostly creoles, or persons who have become creolised, in whom the disease usually assumes the remittent type, and who very seldom, if ever, have it in the aggravated form which constitutes the yellow fever.

While I am upon the subject of medicine you will perhaps forgive me if I should extend this letter by offering you a few remarks re-

specting a me'ical life, which more immediately present themselves to my mind in consequence of my present situation, and the nature of my duty. You are not unacquainted with the many inconveniences and afflictions which attach to the practice of the profession, and you will be pleased to know that these are in some measure counterbalanced by peculiar and exclusive advantages. Medical men are commonly regarded as persons of social habits and sentiments. Often they are viewed as a privileged race, and the term *doctor* serves as a general passport, ensuring a certain degree of affability, and freedom of intercourse. Not unfrequently they are indebted to it for friendly civilities, to which they could have no sort of personal claim, and, on account of it, they sometimes experience a more distinguished attention than falls to the lot of others.

A medical man is made to feel himself at home in every house. He is scarcely admitted as a stranger, ere he is considered as a kind of confidential acquaintance, and received as it were into the bosom of the family. Wheresoever fortune may place him, he is never out of the line of his profession ; and it is peculiarly in his power, at all times and in

all situations, to contribute to the comfort or relief of his fellow-beings ; for almost every one on meeting with *the doctor* feels a real, or a fancied ill, and has a malady to disclose, or an opinion to ask. Like the word *brother* in masonry, the term *doctor* conveys an idea of universal friendship and philanthropy. Even as the brotherhood of the trowel, too, ours is a wide and ancient fraternity, and we, like them, soon become known to each other. We also seek those of our own order, and associate in cordial friendship wherever we meet. Moreover, if general benevolence and the good of mankind be their object, so is it equally ours ; and to continue the similitude, perhaps you will say that, like theirs, our signs and forms are concealed and private. But let us not pursue the parallel, lest we betray secrets, never to be revealed.

In the West Indies, and particularly on service with the army, the medical officers are found to have many advantages. It is usual for every person, upon being thrown into the society of strangers, to grow into familiar acquaintance, by attaching himself to some individual of the party, who becomes as it were the medium of his introduction ; for where

no one takes him by the hand, or pays him particular attention, although every one may behave to him with great civility and politeness, still he is too slightly dependent upon each to become intimately acquainted with any. In this respect the medical men employed with the army in the West Indies are peculiarly happy, for in every ship, with every regiment, and almost at every plantation, they find a professional brother who in the most friendly way attaches himself to their comfort, and kindly seeks to procure them accommodation. On this head I speak with much satisfaction, being able, from personal experience, to bear testimony to a general spirit of amity, and an uniform practice of good offices, on the part of my brethren.

At most of the West India plantations some member of our fraternity is either resident upon the estate, or is in frequent attendance as the physician, surgeon, and intimate friend of the household. He is usually a person of influence, and whenever a medical officer of the army visits the estate, *the doctor*, warmly attaching himself to his professional brother, quickly makes him acquainted with the family, and procures him all the facilities

of social intercourse. This I have many times experienced; and, by means of the medical attendant, have not unfrequently been regarded as the *friend* of the house; before my comrades had ceased to be considered as *strangers*! Military titles of themselves create a sense of awe and reserve, and although a military man be received with equal attention and politeness, he does not meet with the same ease and frankness on the part of the family, nor has he the good fortune to find an individual of his own fraternity, who might take a particular interest in making him known.

So likewise if a military or naval man be required to visit a ship or a regiment, where he has no acquaintance with any of the officers: although he may be politely received, and meet with all the common civilities due to a stranger, yet his claims being equal upon all, and no one selecting him as the particular object of his attention, he returns nearly as great a stranger as he went. Not so the medical man. If he is called on board any of the ships of war, although he be an utter stranger, he finds a professional brother who hails him as an acquaintance, and kindly attaching him-

self to his service not only shews him every personal attention, but makes it his object to introduce him to the officers, by whom he is received, not as a common stranger, but as their surgeon's friend. The same if his duty leads him to a regiment: there likewise, although entirely unknown, he is cordially received by a branch of the medical fraternity, who, politely devoting himself to his comfort, honors him with his attentions, and makes him acquainted with the officers of the mess, not as a mere stranger, but as a person in whose accommodation he feels a particular interest.

These may appear only trifles to you, who daily indulge amidst the comforts and luxuries of old England, and can hourly command the fertile accommodations of all-prolific London; but they who have known the hard laws of privation will tell you that such-like trifles are often very important on service, particularly to those who are employed on distant and foreign stations.

Many other privileges might be enumerated as peculiar to medical men, or attaching to their professional occupation, some

even amidst the bloody strife of war; for although balls and bullets have no respect for persons, nor shew any distinctions in the field, still when the fury of the battle is over, not his friends only, but likewise the enemy inclines to protect, rather than to injure the *doctor*, for his is the duty of humanity, and extends alike to all. It belongs not to him to discriminate. The *effect* of the battle alone concerns him: he has nothing to do with the cause! If a suffering object appear it is no question whether he be a friend or a foe: he languishes and is therefore entitled to his care; for it is his to stop the gushing streams of life, and to pour a healing balm into the wounds of afflicted humanity, in whatever breast she bleed.

In his command a medical man is absolute, and without control. Indeed nothing can be more arbitrary than medical government. The doctor is even more despotic than the mightiest chief. Passive obedience is his first law: he dictates in positive terms, and exacts the most rigid submission. Nor will this seem unreasonable, when it is recollected that the general's command regards only life, while the doctor's concerns both life, and more important health!

Perhaps you will pardon my pen in proceeding one step further, to notice the very highest gratification and best reward of a medical life :—in comparison of which all the honors, privileges, and advantages above alluded to, are light as the dying breeze. It may be remarked that the duties of a medical man are arduous and important beyond all other occupations. Constant fatigue and anxiety are his lot. The health of others is his care ; and he is often entrusted with the lives and happiness of nearest and dearest friends. Unbounded confidence is reposed in him, and if his anxious exertions are crowned with success, he is hailed as saviour, father, and friend ! His whole time is at the public command. Not a moment is securely his own : daily and hourly is he called upon to witness the most heart-rending scenes of affliction, and it is his peculiar province to be sought only in the hour of distress ; whence his whole life is spent in the house of lamentation and of woe. But, happily for the humane and feeling mind, even these duties have their reward. On service, if a soldier or a sailor be relieved, gratitude attaches him to his doctor's interest, who is ever afterwards secure of his aid and protection. He will fight in his defence, and

expose himself to every danger for his safety. But it is in private life, and in the more retired paths of the profession, that the feeling heart meets its genuine return: for to relieve a suffering object from distress—to check the sad ravages of disease—to restore an affectionate and beloved parent, or a duteous child from the bed of sickness, and thereby to dispel the cloud of sorrow, or wipe away the tear of affliction; and then to receive the heartfelt thanks and blessings of a grateful family, is a consolation which none but medical men can know! This it is that reconciles the anxious toils of the profession—that forms the high compensation of our labours—and the happiest reward of our cares!

LETTER IV.

Author apprehensive lest his unanswered notes should provoke feelings of repentance in his friend. Military punishment of the Dutch for the crime of intoxication. Remarks made very mal à propos by an English soldier. Two English sailors, and an electric eel. Form and powers of this fish. A party of wild-looking Indians visit Fort St. Andrew. The Schacomynghy monkey. An example of the effect of slavery, and distinctions of colour, exhibited by a mulatto woman. Birth-day feast at Mr. Blair's. Sand flies. The wet season beginning to subside. Frequent rain at night. Temperature. Lightning. Appearance of the moon. A beautiful lunar Iris. Author feels the inconvenience of being separated from his baggage. American shoes. The medical officers in Guiana still expect to proceed to St. Domingo. Author's dilemma regarding the letters of friends.

Berbische, July 22d.

WITHOUT the opportunity of knowing whether my frequent, and, I fear, too often uninteresting notes have already provoked your repentance, my pen continues to direct to you its offerings: more, however, from the desire of assuring you that I cannot be unfaithful to a promise, and from a wish of proving that my mind does not detach itself from those I esteem, than from any persuasion

that my letters can afford you either satisfaction or amusement.

I have been lately on a visit to the governor at New Amsterdam, and had there an opportunity of witnessing the Dutch mode of punishing their soldiers for drunkenness; which is by making them run the gauntlet between two ranks of their comrades, so placed as for each to give the offender a stripe upon his bare back, every time that he passes. The punishment was conducted in the following manner: a party of about forty of the soldiers, with fixed bayonets, were drawn out upon parade, in open rank, and standing front to front, forming a kind of alley closed at each end. Within side, between the ranks, were stationed the drum-major, and the prisoner, the latter stripped of his coat, waistcoat, and shirt, and with his hands tied before him. On a signal being given by beat of drum, its major, dignified with bearing a majestic staff in his hand, commenced his parade, in slow march, up and down the alley, the prisoner closely following behind, who received a stripe with a green fresh-gathered twig from each of the soldiers, every time that he went and returned. Several drum-boys were placed at

the outside of the ranks with small bundles of sticks in order to renew the supply, when any one chanced to break. Non-commissioned officers were also stationed at the back of the ranks provided with canes for the purpose of transferring any stripes to the soldiers which they might neglect to give to the prisoner, or to place upon their own shoulders any deficiencies which might arise from their not exerting a due strength of arm.

In this manner was the man marched and flogged, flogged and marched, up and down, at the heel of the drum-major, until he had received many hundreds of lashes, and his bruised back exhibited one frightfully black surface, from his neck down to the waistband of his breeches. No blood was spilt, nor perhaps was the pain quite so acute as it commonly is from our cat o' nine tails; but the sadly beaten skin, swollen with blackness, was not less distressing to the sight than a more blood-stained wound, and possibly even more difficult of cure. Several drums were beat in loud roll during the whole time of the punishment, which served to drown the cries of the sufferer, while it increased the military parade of the scene.

It was somewhat remarkable that, at the very moment of this punishment, one of our own soldiers came reeling along in drunken gambols, tumbling against the very ranks employed to inflict the penalty of his own crime. On seeing what they were doing, he stammered out in broken accent—"That's right, *camarades* ; give it him ; lay it on, boys ; make him smart for it ; a drunken *Yaa—well !* cut close ; lay it in deep ; make him remember it, a drunken Dutch-dog !" He was not aware how soon it was likely to be laid much *deeper* on his own back. The captain of his company happened to be present, and immediately ordered him into confinement in the guard house, preparatory to being led forth, at a more sober moment, to probably a severer punishment, than that which had so amused him in his cups.

The Governor has a large electric eel, which he has kept for several years in a tub, made for that purpose, placed under a small shed near to the house. This fish possesses strong electric powers, and often causes scenes of diversion among the soldiers and sailors, who are struck with astonishment at its qualities, and believe it to be in league with some

evil spirit. Two sailors wholly unacquainted with the properties of the fish, were one day told to fetch an eel, which was lying in the tub in the yard, and give it the cook to dress for dinner. It is a strong fish of seven or eight pounds weight, and gives a severe shock on being touched, particularly if at all irritated or enraged. The sailors had no sooner reached the shed, than one of them plunged his hand to the bottom of the tub to seize the eel; when he received a blow which benumbed his whole arm; and without knowing what it was, he started from the tub shaking his fingers, and holding his elbow with his other hand, crying out "Damme, Jack, what a thump he fetched me with his tail." His messmate laughing at "such a foolish notion," next put down his hand to reach out the eel, but receiving a similar shock, he snapped his fingers likewise, and ran off crying out "Damme, he did give you a thump! He's a fighting fellow: he has fetched me a broadside too!—Damme, let's both have a hawl at him together, Jack, then we shall board his d——d slippery carcass spite of his rudder." Accordingly they both plunged their hands into the tub, and seized the fish, by a full grasp round the body. This

was rougher treatment than he commonly experienced, and he returned it with a most violent shock, which soon caused them to quit their hold. For a moment they stood aghast, then rubbing their arms, holding their elbows, and shaking their fingers, they capered about with pain and amazement, swearing that their arms were broke, and that it was the devil in the tub in the shape of an eel. They now perceived that it was not a simple blow of the tail, which they had felt before; nor could they be prevailed upon to try again to take out the fish, but stole away rubbing their elbows, swearing the devil was in the tub, and cursing "the trick about the cook and the eel."

You have, no doubt, seen drawings of this fish, and have met with preparations of it in the different museums and collections of the curious. Its form is not so round as that of the common eel. The head is flatter, as is likewise the tail, and much broader; the sides are less convex and deeper; the back is wide, and the body tapers down somewhat abruptly, terminating at the belly in a thin membrane, forming a kind of fin. I have preserved the skin of one, which I hope to

shew you in England at the end of the war. The shock they communicate is sometimes very powerful, and precisely resembles that from the electrical machine. I have received it both from contact, and by means of conductors. The fish at Governor Van Battenburg's once gave me a severe blow from touching it, in the water, with the end of a polished ramrod belonging to one of the soldier's firelocks.

We were, yesterday, visited at the fort by a party of the wildest-looking Indians I have yet seen. Sixteen came down the river in one canoe, forming an unusually fierce and romantic group. The men had their skins painted in various odd figures—some with red, others with black and red; and some had a thin small plate of silver, hung by way of ornament from the nose. A custom also prevailed among the women of this party, which we had not before observed. They wore in their ears thick pieces of wood, of the size and shape of a common wine cork, not suspended to the ear, nor hanging by a ring, but thrust through a large hole, cut in the substance of the ear itself.

This party was less cordial with us, than many who had preceded them. They also made their visit shorter. We procured from them some Indian baskets, and some bows and arrows. I had likewise an opportunity of purchasing a small lion monkey, called *Schacomynghy*, to supply the place of a most beautiful one which I had brought down the river, from the Indian village near Savonette, and which had lately died.

The *Schacomynghy* is a very handsome playful little fellow. He is the smallest of the monkey tribe, being considerably less than the common squirrel of England, and in weight not more than five or six ounces. He perches very commodiously upon a person's forefinger—or will run up the side of a quart bottle and take his seat very conveniently at the top, amusing himself with putting down his little hand to taste the wine or water, or whatever may be contained within. His colour is nearly black, with sometimes a slight mixture of dark grey—the tail is longer than his body. His neck is covered with thick, long, and bushy hair, like the full mane of the lion, whence the name of *lion monkey*, by which he

is commonly known. His face is oval, approaching to circular, and his features are less disgusting than is common among the monkey tribe; the ears are smooth and round, and without hair. He is a very delicate little animal, and extremely susceptible of cold—even in this climate he will creep into the folds of the bedclothes, or within the bed for warmth. His kennel is commonly a coconut shell, his bed a little cotton, put within it, and this he seems to enjoy, without feeling it too close or hot.

You would scarcely pardon me, were I to omit noting to you a fact which occurred to my observation during my visit at New Amsterdam. In company with some of the officers I went to make a morning call at the house of one of the most respectable inhabitants of the town; and while we were sitting with the lady of the family, a fine black child, about a year old, strayed into the room, and trotting round, looked and smiled with innocent playfulness at each of the party. Diverted with the naked little *Pickaninny*, I took her upon my knee, and danced her about, and played with her for some time; then led her out at

the door, to give her to a young mulatto woman, one of the slaves of the house, whom I saw sitting in the hall. On offering the child to this copper-skinned lady, she darted a repulsive look and turned from me. Not aware of the cause of this I lifted up the infant, to place it upon her knee, when she indignantly pushed the poor babe away. I still repeated the attempt, endeavoring to make her comprehend that I wished to have the child taken from me : but no ! she continued to thrust her away with increased indignation. Surprised at this conduct, and wholly unable to account for it, I led my little naked female back into the parlour, and mentioning the circumstance to Madame S —, begged of her to tell me whether it was the black face of the infant, or my pallid face, that was the object of dislike to this damsel of *golden bloom*. A monosyllable conveyed the explanation ! Madame S —, pointing to the child, whispered “ *noire !* ” Is it possible ? I exclaimed ! Can it be credible that this creature who is a slave herself, and only one remove from the negroes, can have imbibed such proud ideas of distinction, as to despise a fellow-slave, and helpless infant, merely because she differs a single shade from her-

self, in the colour of her skin ? “ *Il n’y a rien de plus vrai,*” replied Madame S —, who further remarked, that this very mulatto was herself a most excellent nurse, and peculiarly fond of children—but, to be worthy of her attentions, it was indispensable that they should be, at least, as fair as herself : her sister’s children, the offspring of a mulatto woman and a white man, she would nurse with the utmost attention and tenderness ! On learning this I again went to the mulatto, and endeavored to prevail upon her, to take from me the good humoured and playful little negress. But I found that no persuasions could induce her to notice the poor babe, who, all the time, looked up in her face, and solicited her attentions with a smile of heavenly innocence. Her skin was black, and it would demean even a slave, but a single degree whiter than herself, to treat her as a fellow-being. Such are the distinctions of colour ! and such alas ! the misfortune, which luxury presumes to impose upon a numerous race, for no better reason than that, in his infinite wisdom, it has pleased the common parent of all, to place upon his children of Europe, a paler skin, than he has given to his children of Africa.

I have again been one of a party across the river, to visit our princely neighbour Mr. Blair, who in this remote corner of the globe, where others find it difficult to procure the common provisions of the table, would seem to have assembled an inexhaustible supply of all the good things of life. It was a birth-day festival, and perhaps a more choice and sumptuous repast could not have been found, even in the proud city of London. The dinner table exhibited a happy combination of English taste, and Irish hospitality. It was served in the style of Europe, and displayed a profusion of the best and richest viands, without any of the more common dishes of the country, such as Moscovy duck, Guinea-fowl, kid, and the like. Amidst a crowded variety of other covers we had a large green turtle, with a great variety of the best European vegetables, and, to crown the feast, a complete course of sweets, consisting of no less than four-and-twenty dishes. The fruits were endemic, and such as London with all its riches cannot produce. The drinking part of the feast was such as I have described to you before. At no other house in the colony are such entertainments given. A circumstance, which,

together with the paucity of our ordinary supply, and indeed the difficulty of procuring any fresh provisions for our table, makes such a gala-day quite an object of notice. To you, who have daily feasting before you, it can offer nothing remarkable. You will not be surprized when I tell you that the generous donor experiences the honorable reward of luxury, by feeling, in his remotest extremities, the pungency of his dishes.

The Dutch division of the party returned across the river, at an early hour, like orderly citizens. The officers remained all night, but a rational sobriety tempered the mirth of the evening. I rose before my comrades, in the morning, intending to bathe in the sea; but on going upon the fine beach before the house, for that purpose, my face, and legs, and hands were so bitten by myriads of sand flies, as to deter me from exposing to them my naked surface.

The weather has been tolerably dry since the commencement of July, particularly in the day time. In the night we have frequent showers of rain. The breeze is usually steady,

and hitherto we have not found the air perceptibly hotter than in the preceding months of May and June. The Thermometer seldom exceeds 84. Almost every night, we have mild and beautiful flashes of lightning, following each other in quick succession without thunder. Here also chaste Cynthia appears clad in peculiarly bright and fair apparel. A few nights ago we had an opportunity of seeing a very perfect rainbow, formed from the rays of this transcendent queen of night. A pale-looking cloud, jealous of her brightness, sought to obscure it by interposing itself directly before her, when, as if to shew her powers, she calmly separated her rays, and arched them on the heavens, in all the superior splendour of the beautiful Iris.

You have already learned, that on leaving Barbadoes we were hurried away without our baggage, it being supposed that we should quickly return thither, in order to proceed to St. Domingo. We now begin to feel the inconvenience of this separation, and particularly in the article of shoes, which we are obliged to buy from the very wretched stores, brought by the Americans. Such execrable spe-

cimens I had never seen before. An English dust-woman would scarcely pick them up in the street. They are commonly mouldy and of very hard, rough, and coarse leather ; the colour of which is a rusty brown, with red shining through it, and withal, they are most miserably, and I may say, painfully made. The price of these uneasy coverings for our feet, is as high as three dollars. Were we in the expectation of remaining upon this station, I should beg of you, to send me out a package from Rymer : but it is still intimated that the branch of the St. Domingo hospital staff, on duty in these colonies, may be soon removed ; and in this uncertainty the continuing to wear rough American shoes, will not be the greatest mortification I shall have to submit to, for it delays the hope of speedily hearing from my friends in England. I cannot say—write to me here : yet I know not when I may go hence ; and if I should be ordered to proceed first to Barbadoes, or Martinique, it may be long before I reach Hispaniola. Still, amidst all the uncertainties of my situation, my best hope of hearing from you at all, seems to rest on your letters being addressed to the Head Quarters of the army of St. Domingo. Continue, therefore, to send them

thither, and, whenever I may arrive, I shall hail the accumulated feast that will await me, as the best reward of the long and anxious suspense to which I am so painfully exposed.

LETTER V.

Author suddenly recalled to the colony of Demarara on account of increased sickness among the troops. Remarks concerning the voyage. Busy season of duty anticipated by the colonists supervenes. Soldiers fall sick at their post. Author makes a visit at the fort, to inquire respecting the late increase of sickness. Probable cause.

La Bourgade, July 30.

AFTER addressing my last letter to you, I was called from Berbische, somewhat suddenly, in consequence of a rapid increase of sickness among the troops in the colony of Demarara.

Consistent with my usual sufferings at sea, I was extremely sick and ill on the passage, and was detained on the water, by untoward circumstances, twice as long as the distance might have required. The necessity for my immediate attendance here, leaving me no choice with regard to my mode of travelling, I embarked on board the first vessel that sailed, and which proved to be nearly allied to the memorable Voltigeur. But, although I was

very comfortless, and ill-accommodated, I was not exposed to the multiplied evils of my former voyage ; and fortunately, although the passage was tedious, I had to support the present difficulties only for a single night. We had no cabin, nor had I any means of being sheltered from the heavy rain which fell in the evening, but by forcing myself into a partial opening at the hatchway, and thrusting my person between some bags of cotton, and the boards of the deck above, lying extended at full length and flat upon my back. This I tried ; but suffocation threatened me, and I was soon taught, that the heaviest washing from the rain, was less perilous than such protection.

I was put safe on shore the second day, at one of the landing places at Stabroek, which are here called *Sterlings*. They are long wooden platforms, which are built on pillars of timber, and extend to a considerable distance into the river, forming very convenient places for descending into the boats, and landing from them.

Having mentioned the cause of my return to this colony ; you will expect that the

predictions of the inhabitants of these settlements are about to be verified; I may therefore observe to you, that the busy season of duty which they led me to anticipate, has stolen upon me, "like a thief in the night." The number of sick, and the malignity of the disease have rapidly increased, and it seems probable that very few, if any of the troops will wholly escape its visitation. Of the garrison, from ten to fifteen have been received into the hospital, in fever, within the twenty-four hours, for several days in succession; and we have remarked that great numbers have been seized while employed on duty as sentinels.

I have visited the fort, and examined very minutely into the habits of the soldiers, and the general œconomy of the garrison, in order to ascertain whether any cause existed there, to which this rapid increase of sickness could be attributed: but I met with nothing that could explain it, for although the men have lately received a payment of clearance money, it by no means appears, that the use of spirituous liquors has increased to any degree that could excite a suspicion of this being the cause of the multiplied sickness which prevails. It

is, probably, the mere effect of the season, resulting from the increased heat of the days, the damp chilliness of the evenings, and the offensive miasmata exhaled from half-exposed mud.

The quantity of rain that now falls is not sufficient to cover the feculent sediment of the numerous ditches, nor to prevent their unwholesome vapours from rising into the atmosphere; and the partial showers which occur during the evening and night, by softening the half-dried surface, favor the exhalation, while they produce a chilling dampness, which perhaps contributes to render the body more than usually susceptible of impression.

The evenings are now so much colder, to our feelings, than we had found them during the preceding months, that we have lately been able to sit with the room-door shut, and have even thought that a blanket, during the night, might have been supportable. Yet the thermometer indicates no considerable diminution of heat in the evening, and but very slight augmentation at noon. It is therefore probable, that the increased susceptibility of the system, proceeds from some change in the state

of the body, not exclusively depending upon the mere effect of heat and cold. But you will not forgive me if I here engage in hypothetical disquisitions. I will therefore content myself with having related to you the facts, and without offering doubtful inferences, leave you to form your own conclusions,

LETTER VI.

Author called from La Bourgade to Mahaica, on account of the prevailing sickness among the troops. Medical officers not exempt from disease. Loss of two of the Author's assistants. Twofold duty of the detachment of the hospital staff. Author unassisted at the moment of the heaviest pressure of disease. Endures excessive fatigue and exhaustion. Friendly alarm of the officers regarding him. Remarks upon a physician's duty. Situation of Mahaica. The barracks converted into an hospital. Plantation, "Lancaster." 99th regiment stationed at Mahaica. Salt meat and plantains the daily food. Author joins the mess of the 99th regiment.

Mahaica, August 7.

AGAIN my residence is changed, and I have to address you from a new home. The same unhappy cause which removed me from Berbische to La Bourgade, called me thence to an important post occupied by a strong division of our troops at Mahaica. Disease has spread his sickening wings over the whole extent of this coast, and threatens every European with the perils of his ordeal.

Unhappily no exemption is granted in favor of the medical attendants, and at a period when we are most required to relieve the sickness of others, we are most liable to it ourselves. On my arrival at Mahaica, I had the misfortune to find the medical assistant whom I had ordered upon this station, lying in an advanced stage of yellow fever, and rapidly sinking into the grave, which has since swallowed his remains. Accounts have also reached me of the death of another of our professional comrades, whom I left only a few days ago on duty, and in good health, at the hospital at La Bourgade. These are afflicting deductions from our thin establishment, and the more painfully felt from the urgent calls of the moment being multiplied, by the sad inconvenience of some of the regiments not having with them either of their medical officers; which throws the whole of the regimental, as well as the hospital duty, upon the few gentlemen of the St. Domingo staff, who were detached to these colonies, and whose situation at this critical juncture is harassing and distressful to the highest degree. From the heavy pressure of sickness, and the necessarily remote distribution of our very limited division, it is only with extreme

toil and exertion that we are at all able to do justice to the poor suffering objects who claim our attention. Yet, with an increasing demand for our services, we have the severe misfortune to see our numbers and our means diminish.

My own best efforts shall not be wanting, but I am well aware that there are many comforts I could wish for the sick, which from the circumstances of our situation it will be wholly impossible to procure for them. At this post I have the charge of a crowded host of patients, all inconveniently placed, and have neither a mate nor an apothecary, nor any other medical man to assist me: I am therefore exposed to incessant and almost insupportable fatigue. My whole time is spent amidst the sick, or in procuring for them some accommodation: they occupy all my hours, and all my care.

Unfortunately too my quarters are nearly a mile from the hospital, and I have that distance to walk four times every day, which, alone, is considered by the inhabitants as an immense labour, and enough to destroy the strongest frame. At six o'clock, I make my

morning visit, when several hours are fully employed, with my head bent almost to the ground, in examining, and listening to nearly a hundred patients, all lying upon paillasse spread on the floor; and many of them scarcely able to hear, or reply to my questions. After this I have to instruct an orderly soldier to compound my prescriptions, and to see him administer the medicines. Next I have to prescribe the provisions, and the mode of preparing them for the convalescents, which is here no less a duty than to prescribe medicine for the sick; and further, from having no purveyor, it falls to my lot, in some degree to superintend even the cooking—otherwise, as only salt-meat is issued, our messes would scarcely be made eatable—certainly not palatable, nor fit for the stomachs of men only recovering from disease. But from great care, and attention, in having the meat steeped the over-night, then well scalded, and afterwards stewed in fresh water, with rice, yams, sweet potatoes, pease, or broken pieces of bread, we form various changes of nutritive, and not disagreeable pottage.

Having gone through the whole of these ceremonies, which you will believe consume

a full proportion of the forenoon, I have to walk back to the barracks, where, on my arrival, I am not unfrequently so exhausted as to be obliged to throw myself at full length upon my mattress, and lie for a considerable time before I can recover sufficient strength either to bathe my person, or take my food.

In the evening I return again to the hospital, and repeat my visit to the sick as in the morning. Whenever I can command an interval it is occupied in writing, for in addition to my other engagements, I have to make out the necessary returns for the commanding officer, and for head-quarters, and to keep full and correct statements of all accounts, receipts, and hospital disbursements.

Amidst my busy round I often hear it loudly whispered that the fatigue to which I am subjected must soon destroy me, and many of the officers and planters are kind enough to express friendly apprehensions regarding my safety : but in this hour of need no personal considerations can induce me to relax in my duty. More than my utmost efforts are required to procure only scanty comforts for the sick, and, under such circumstances, I

can neither enjoy rest, nor shun fatigue. Not only an imperious sense of duty, but humanity also calls upon me to contribute every aid in my power, and I cannot but feel that to limit my exertions, or diminish my efforts would be unjust, if not even criminal, towards the unfortunate objects of my care. I cannot therefore shrink from the task, whilst I have health and strength to support it. With respect to disease I feel not the slightest personal anxiety, and even if I did, I should deem it necessary, situated as I now am, to subdue my terrors. A military officer does not shrink from a cannon, although he sees it pointed towards him!—and shall a medical officer turn from disease, which it is his duty to meet, and to combat! I have been always of opinion that the physician who deserts his post in the hour of sickness is no less a coward than the officer who abandons his garrison at a period of danger; or the soldier who turns his back upon an enemy in the field of battle: therefore, however anxious the kindness of my friends and comrades may render them, concerning my safety, I cannot prevail upon myself to lessen my exertions.

From its situation Mahaica might seem to be one of the most healthy posts in Guiana. It is open to the sea, and freely exposed to the cool breeze. We have no town, nor village near us. The name is given to a certain district about the mouth of (what is here termed a creek, but what is in fact) a considerable river, called by the Indians Mahaica. The fort, in point of strength, offers nothing formidable, but its situation is well chosen as a military post, being on the coast between the two rivers Demarara and Berbische, about twenty miles from the former, and fifty from the latter; and immediately upon the border of the sea, commanding at once the entrance of the river Mahaica, and of a smaller creek which opens nearly at the same spot into the ocean. Next to Fort William Frederic and Fort St. Andrew, Mahaica is the most important garrison in the two colonies. The barracks at the fort are not large enough to contain the whole of the troops now stationed here, the house and other buildings therefore of a neighbouring estate, called Lancaster, are occupied for that purpose. Indeed to meet the exigencies of the moment we are compelled to appropriate every room at the fort to the use

of the sick—and all the officers and soldiers, who are well, are removed to the plantation Lancafter, which is nearly a mile from the fort, upon the same bank of the river, but on the opposite side of the creek.

Lancafter is a large cotton estate belonging to the representatives of a Mr. Phillips, who is lately dead. It is now under the direction of a manager, subject to the eye and control of an attorney; the former residing on the spot, the latter at a plantation in the vicinity.

This estate is traversed in various parts by double rows of trees, forming a pleasant shade between them, and bearing a fruit, resembling in flavour the Turkey fig, hence called fig-trees. They are rather larger than the orange trees, and their foliage is thick and green. The fruit is about the size of the coffee berry: it is filled with small seeds, and in substance is like the fig.

The 99th regiment is, at present, on this station, and in point of quarters is very conveniently accommodated, the officers living in the house, and the soldiers in a large cotton

logis, which forms a spacious and well ventilated barrack.

Respecting provisions, we are less happy than regarding our quarters. Salt meat and the vegetables of the country constitute our almost unvaried fare. Occasionally we procure a Moscovy duck, a chicken, a young kid, or a sucking pig, and then it is high-feast. Our standing dishes are pease soup, and salt pork. The plantain also furnishes a steady supply. We now eat this with creole appetite, and although we, at first, disliked it, we begin to esteem it as one of the most pleasant and useful articles of food, which the country affords : roasted, it serves as bread—boiled, it is used as a table-vegetable—stewed, or fried, it is eaten as fruit, and pounded in a mortar, it makes into excellent pudding. The yam is also a substantial friend to us—as are likewise the eddoes and cassada. The potatoes of the country are sweet and satiating, and not much esteemed. We occasionally obtain a few which have been brought from Europe in the trading ships : and these we enjoy as a great treat. The officers have kindly received me into the regimental mess, which, by offering me the common supply of their table,

happily relieves me from all the trouble and concern of seeking provisions; and at this moment of hurry and fatigue, is an important accommodation to me.

LETTER VII.

Barbarous murder of a slave. Cruelty practised towards his wife. Situation of this injured woman after her punishment. Conduct of the gang at the funeral of their murdered brother. Alarm of the manager. He seeks protection from the officers. Observations of the attorney of the estate regarding the crime. His boast that in defiance of the laws a slave may be punished to any extent. Process of picking the maggots from the poor woman's sores. Information communicated by the surgeon of the estate. The plantation Lancaster notorious for cruel treatment of the slaves. Remarks concerning slavery.

Mahaica, August.

WERE I to proceed only upon the knowledge I have of your feelings, I should not forgive myself in laying before you a history even more direful and afflicting than any arising from the ravages of the much-dreaded destroyer of this climate ; but when I recollect that it was emphatically your request that I would relate to you every fact which should occur to my observation, respecting the slaves, I cannot refrain from telling you, that since my arrival at Mahaica, one of the most shocking instances of cruelty has occurred, which was ever perpetrated even in a land of bondage.

Two unhappy negroes, a man and a woman, having been driven by cruel treatment to abscond from the plantation Lancaster, were taken a few days since, and brought back to the estate, when the manager, whose inhuman severity had caused them to fly from his tyrannic government, dealt out to them his avenging despotism with more than savage brutality. Taking with him two of the strongest drivers, armed with the heaviest whips, he led out these trembling and wretched Africans, early in the morning, to a remote part of the estate, too distant for the officers to hear their cries ; and, there, tying down first the man, he stood by, and made the drivers flog him with many hundred lashes, until, on releasing him from the ground, it was discovered that he was nearly exhausted : and in this state the inhuman monster struck him on the head, with the butt end of a large whip, and felled him again to the earth ; when the poor negro, escaping at once from his slavery and his sufferings, expired at the murderer's feet. But not satiated with blood, this savage tyrant next tied down the naked woman, on the spot by the dead body of her husband, and with the whips, already deep in gore, compelled the drivers to inflict a punishment of several

hundred lashes, which had nearly released her also from a life of toil and torture.

Hearing of these acts of cruelty, on my return from the hospital, and scarcely believing it possible that they could have been committed, I went immediately to the sick-house to satisfy myself by ocular testimony : when, alas ! I discovered that all I had heard was too fatally true ; for, shocking to relate, I found the wretched and almost murdered woman lying stark-naked on her belly, upon the dirty boards, without any covering to the horrid wounds which had been cut by the whips, and with the still warm and bloody corpse of the man extended at her side, upon the neck of which was an iron collar, and a long heavy chain, which the now murdered negro had been made to wear from the time of his return to the estate. The flesh of the woman was so torn, as to exhibit one extensive sore, from the loins almost down to her hams ; nor had humanity administered even a drop of oil to soften her wounds : the only relief she knew, was that of extending her feeble arm in order to beat off the tormenting flies, with a small green bough, which had been put into her hand for

that purpose by the sympathizing kindness of a fellow slave. A more shocking and distressful spectacle can scarcely be conceived. The dead man, and the almost expiring woman had been brought home, from the place of punishment, and thrown into the negro hospital, amidst the crowd of sick, with cruel unconcern. Lying on the opposite side of the corpse was a fellow-sufferer, in a similar condition to the poor woman. His buttocks, thighs, and part of his back, had been flogged into one large sore, which was still raw, although he had been punished a fortnight before.

The following day we witnessed the preparations for the funeral of their murdered brother, by his fellow slaves. It was conducted in their usual manner, not with the afflicting solemnity of the Christian rites, but with all the mirthful ceremonies of African burial, forming a scene of gaiety, which consisted of music, dancing, singing, and loud noise. They all seemed to rejoice more in his escape from pain and misery, than they sorrowed for his loss.

The body being put into the coffin, and every thing made ready for proceeding to the

grave, the corpse was taken out of the sick-house into the yard, and there placed very carefully upon the heads of two robust negroes, who carried it as far as the house, and then halting under the window of the manager's room, they set the coffin upon the ground, and the whole gang of slaves danced and sang, and played their music round it, in loud gambols, for nearly two hours; beating at intervals, with great violence, against the door and window-shutters, and threatening vengeance upon the murderer of their companion. The manager expecting that they would break into the house to massacre him, and feeling, no doubt, that he merited death from their hands, was seized with sad alarm, and breaking from his hiding place, ran abruptly into the mess-room, imploring the protection of the officers, and looking a ghastly figure of terror. I could not but remark the effect of his sudden appearance among us. Not an officer of the whole mess separated his lips in reply to him. The general feeling seemed to say—a wretch so cruel can deserve no compassion. After a short suspense, the silence, which must have been more severe than the bitterest words, was broken by one of the gentlemen, referring him to his feelings,

and demanding whether he conceived himself to merit either pity or protection. His fears had magnified the danger, for although the slaves were clamorous, we did not observe among them any marks of violence which evinced a disposition forcibly to break into the house. They at length concluded their dance, then replacing the coffin upon the heads of the two negroes, and observing much ceremony with regard to the position of the corpse, they proceeded towards the place of interment. On leaving the court yard, they used the precaution of going round the house, in order to avoid carrying the body across the manager's window—not, as you will suppose, from any sense of delicacy towards him, but from some superstition regarding the spirit of the dead slave. As they moved on, two women tapped gently at the sides of the coffin, as if to appease the corpse, or soften its wrath while passing the murderer's abode. The manager felt highly relieved by their departure; but they had not gone far before the whole party suddenly faced about, and came running back to the house, the two negroes who were carrying the corpse turning round and round with it upon their heads a number of times in the yard, while many of the gang

beat and kicked against the door, and the window-shutters of the manager's room, shouting and crying aloud for vengeance: upon which one of the book-keepers, an old man who had been long upon the estate, went out and joined in the crowd, and exerting his influence to appease them, again led them away, when they went dancing, singing, and beating their music to the place of burial. After a short time the gang returned again into the court yard, having left their companion to seek peace in the grave. The busy dance was now resumed, and they hooted and hissed at the manager, and beat loudly at his door and window, continuing their shoutings and clamour until dark, when they all retired quietly to their huts.

A few days after the funeral the attorney of the estate happened to call at Lancaster to visit the officers, and the conversation naturally turning upon the late cruelty of the manager, and the consequent injury derived to the proprietor, we asked him what punishment the laws of the colony had provided for such horrid and barbarous crimes; expressing our hope that the manager would suffer the disgrace he so justly merited; when,

to our great surprise, the attorney smiled and treated our remarks only as the dreams of men unpractised in the ways of slavery. He spake of the murder with as little feeling as the manager had perpetrated it, and seemed to be amused at our visionary ideas, of *punishing a white man* for his cruel treatment of slaves. To the question whether the manager would not be dismissed from the estate, he replied “*certainly not*”—adding that “*if the negro had been treated as he deserved he would have been flogged to death long before.*” Such was the amount of his sympathy and concern! The laws of the colony he said were intended to prevent any person from punishing a slave with more than thirty-nine lashes, for the same offence; but by incurring only a small fine, he could, at any time, punish a negro with as many hundred lashes as he might wish, “although the governor and the fiscal” were standing at his elbow.

You will believe that I was careful to observe the progress of the frightful wounds inflicted upon the poor woman, and to watch her recovery; and you will be shocked to know that her sufferings were severely increased, by the cruel neglect which succeeded

to her punishment. One morning, upon hearing the loud cries of a female, I was led to look out at my window, when I saw some negroes carrying this unfortunate woman from the sick-house into the yard, where they laid her down in the dirt, upon the bare ground, amidst a heavy shower of rain, then, kneeling at her sides, they proceeded to examine minutely into her wounds; and you will scarcely hold it credible, when I tell you that they were employed a full half-hour *picking maggots out of her sores*. The ulcerations had penetrated to a great depth, particularly within the thighs, where the lashes of the whips had cut round, and torn the flesh in a frightful manner. The ulcers were very raw and considerably enlarged, by the gnawing of the maggots which had been bred within them. I cannot describe to you the horror I felt at this deplorable sight. I had often heard of *maggotting* sheep, but this was the first instance I had met with of maggotting a human being, and I felt additional distress in finding the subject of it a poor unhappy female, whose punishment had been already severe, and in whom the occasion for such a beastly process might and ought to have been prevented, had the com-

mon dictates of humanity been observed. The poor afflicted wretch groaned heavily under her sufferings, and the operation, which in itself was severely painful, was rendered so in a still greater degree by the roughness of her untutored surgeons. During the whole of the time, she was exposed naked to the rain, and to the eyes of slaves, officers, soldiers, and all who chanced to pass that way. It was a spectacle, which was equally offensive to humanity, and to delicacy !

On representing the horrid cruelty of this case to the surgeon, he remarked to us, that the sores from punishments did not usually fall under his treatment, but were left to the care of the *negro doctor* who had the charge of the sick-house ; and that nothing was more common than to see the wounds filled with maggots—"indeed" said he, "it is often our greatest difficulty, in the practice of surgery in these climates, to prevent the breeding of insects in the sores."

I am sorry to remark that the Lancaster plantation has been, for some time past, distinguished on account of the inhuman treatment observed towards the slaves ; and indeed

it might seem that cruelty had become a contagious malady upon this estate, for we learn, from the most respectable authority, that a former proprietor was so hardened in his savage conduct that, frequently, when a poor unfortunate negro was bound down to the earth, and groaning under the severe pain of two heavy lashes, he would strike him a blow upon the head with the but end of his whip, between each of the strokes given by the drivers; and that, carrying his barbarity still further, he would sometimes order the teeth of the slave to be torn out with a pair of iron pincers, and would himself stand by to see the torture inflicted.

I anticipate your sentiments on reading the history of these inhuman punishments. They afford a lamentable example of the horrors and injustice of slavery, and I cannot but feel that the system which gives to an individual the power of lording his worst passions over a fellow being, uncontrolled, admits of no defence. It is a violation of nature, in which humanity is outraged, and our species degraded!

LETTER VIII.

Troops sickly. Author the only medical officer who has not suffered an attack of fever. The office of priest devolves upon the author. Death of Captain Heritage. Encroachment of the sea at Mahaica. Rumour concerning the sickness of the troops. Author invites the medical practitioners of the colony to his aid. Their mode of treating the disease. The breeze emphatically termed "the doctor." Remarks of the "negro doctor" of the slave hospital. High season of the "yellow fever." Impossibility of preventing the disease. Difficulty of curing it. Alarm of the troops. Medical officers victims to fatigue. Different type of the disease at different stations. Author's contemplations. He proposes to try the effect of prophylactic means. Hospital diet-table improved by the contributions of the planters.

Mahaica, August 22.

I AM exceedingly sorry not to be able to give you improved tidings concerning the health of the troops upon this station. They are still very sickly, and it is afflicting to know that the number of patients increases more rapidly than our means of accommodation. You will breathe me many warm gratulations on learning that I remain quite well, amidst the general sickness which surrounds me; indeed, I am now the only medical officer of

this expedition who has not experienced an attack of fever, and it were too much to suppose that I am wholly to escape its visitation ; for we are told that almost every one, on first coming from Europe, is subjected to a seasoning malady. My best hope is that I may not be seized at this moment, while my services are so essential to the relief of others.

In addition to all my other busy duties I am now called upon to perform the melancholy office of priest. From having no clergyman at Mahaica it falls to my lot to go through the painful and afflicting ceremony of reading the funeral service over my lost comrades. This is a severe task to me, and I am sometimes fearful lest my spirits should become too much depressed to support me through all the various claims of my present calling ; but I am well aware, that if I was to yield to the distressful apprehensions which I see exhibited by those around me, who are not medical men, the situation of the sick must be even more dreadful than it is at present ; I am therefore resolved, if my strength continues, to meet with firmness all the necessities of this urgent period.

We have recently lost a pleasant and amiable companion in the death of captain Heritage, who fell a victim to his timidity of disease. He suffered serious alarm on account of the death of Mr. Ramsden, and we found it wholly impossible to rouse him from the desponding impression. On the 6th instant, he followed poor Ramsden to the grave, and from terror fancied that he perceived a "smell of the disease;" but I remarked, while I was reading the service over the body, that he had placed himself at a considerable distance to windward, holding a handkerchief, the whole of the time, to his mouth and nose. During the two following days he went about, as usual, among his comrades, without complaining of being ill, but still expressing his fears, and occasionally speaking of slight headache. On the morning of the 9th I was called to visit him as a patient, when I found him in bed. On the evening of the 10th he died. He had no strongly marked symptom of disease, nor any sign of great pain or suffering; but an experienced eye might discover from his general appearance, at the first moment of my being called to him, that there was no hope of his recovery.—Extreme languor, with a peculiar change of feature not to be

described by words, might be said to constitute the disease, while they were correct indications of its dangerous tendency. Soon, every thing he swallowed was thrown from the stomach without effort—the prostration of strength became excessive—he grew helpless—sunk into a state of listlessness—made no complaint:—low delirium supervened—he turned yellow, and fell to the earth like an autumn leaf.

Amidst our many troubles we have the fearful prospect of seeing both the fort and hospital swept away by the sea, which is encroaching upon the land, at the point of Mahaica, with rapid strides. A few evenings ago a spring tide washed over the banks, and, forcing its way into the hospital, placed all the sick, who were lying upon the floor, in a sea bath. We have procured a numerous gang of negroes to strengthen the fortifications, and to bank out the invading forces of Neptune ; but I much fear that our feeble resistance cannot long avail us, for every appearance indicates that, very soon, the whole of the territory about the fort will be swallowed up, by the irresistible cravings of old Ocean.

You will not be surpris'd to know that rumour has been busy on the subject of the prevailing sickness, and its fatal tendency : or that the prejudices of the inhabitants have led them to imagine that if it were treated by *the colonial doctors* the disease might be easily subdued. In consequence of such remarks, and in order to satisfy my own feelings, by trying every means which it was in my power to obtain, for the relief of the sick, I have solicited the aid of the medical men of the country, both English and Dutch, and requested them to oblige me by attending frequently at the hospital, that I might avail myself of their talents and experience to the improvement of my own practice, and the consequent benefit of the afflicted : several of the gentlemen have, accordingly, been good enough to favor us with occasional attendance ; but I find that here, as at Berbische, the disease is treated in the same manner as the common remittent fever of the country, and nearly the whole reliance confided to the bark—that great sheet-anchor of West India practice. This was prescribed in ample quantity, and in various forms, but it wholly failed of success.

At the time of poor captain Heritage's attack I particularly requested the assistance of one of my colonial brethren ; and perceiving that it was entirely out of my own power to relieve him, I begged of Dr. — to use his utmost endeavors to save him, when, without appearing to entertain the same apprehensions of his danger as myself, he advised a copious use of the bark. After visiting captain H. this gentleman went with me into the hospital, where I selected four other recent cases, which seemed to me to threaten danger, and requested the doctor to take these under his care, — to command the resources of the hospital department, and to exert his best means of restoring them : but he declined the charge of attending them, as his patients, although he consented to accompany me in my visits, and to consult with me regarding them ; which afforded me infinite satisfaction, as I earnestly and devoutly hoped to profit by his practice for the benefit of others. The bark was prescribed for them all, and most liberally administered : but in vain, for not one of them recovered ! The doctor was greatly disappointed and chagrined at the unhappy result of these cases, and, declaring that there was a "*something different*" in the fever which prevailed among

the troops, from that which usually attacked the colonists, he wished me better success, and withdrew his attendance.

I have the satisfaction to hear, that this gentleman sedulously meets all the loud rumours of the neighbourhood by insisting that "whether the sick do or do not recover, no fitter medical treatment can be employed, even by men who have been twenty years in the colony, than that which is now adopted at the military hospital."

It were scarcely necessary to mention that the trade wind is lighter and less steady, during the decline of the wet season, than it becomes in the time of the dry season : so necessary, and salutiferous is it esteemed at all times, and particularly at the present period, that on the breeze setting in, it is common for the people of the country to exclaim, "here comes the doctor," thus honoring it with an academic title, and hailing it as the best medical friend of the colony. If it be not so powerful now as it is in the dry season, still it may be said to be always free at Mahaica, although it does not prove successful in preventing the wide ravages of disease.

I often hold long conversations with "*Doctor Bob*," the resident Negro physician at the black hospital, and sub-medical attendant of his brother slaves, who is very communicative, and furnishes me with many facts and remarks ; and although, as you will suppose, they are not always of sterling value, they are occasionally interesting and important. A few days since, on finding that his sick-list had increased in almost as great a degree as my own, I asked Dr. Bob how this happened, when he replied—" *It always so, Massa, at this time o' year, because him weather change from wet to dry.*" Seeing a negro boy, at the same moment, in a high paroxysm of fever, his case became the subject of our conversation, in the course of which this sable doctor made the following remark—" *Him fever shall go, when him water come low ;—him always come hot, when him tide high :*"—a fact which we very frequently observe at the hospital, although, perhaps, not so generally or so intimately, as to authorize an unqualified opinion, that the febrile accessions strictly connect with lunar influence.

The present moment may be said to be the high season of yellow-fever. It now rages

in its utmost violence, and with sorrow I remark, that great numbers perish from its malignity. Until the partial rains of the present period shall have ceased, and the dry season be well set in, it is said that we are to expect a continuance of sickness : nor does it appear to be within the power of man to prevent it. Of the cure, perhaps in many cases, I might speak in similar terms, for although we can frequently remove the disease, interrupt its course, or lessen its violence by combating it at an *early stage* ; still, when the more malignant symptoms have once appeared, it seldom happens that any medicine can arrest their progress, or afford relief. Bark, mercury, bleeding, bathing, and a variety of other remedies have been amply tried—but tried in vain, for all have proved equally ineffectual.

A painful alarm obtains among the troops ; the medical officers are falling victims to their fatigue ; and many circumstances combine to augment the melancholy gloom of this afflicting period. At Mahaica the numbers admitted into the hospital form a very large proportion of the garrison ; the same is likewise the case at Stabroek. At Maiconuy

and Awbarry, two smaller posts between Mahaica and Berbische, although much of sickness prevails, the disease assumes an intermittent or remittent form, and is less fatal—while here, and at Fort W. Frederic, it attacks with all the destructive violence of a continued fever.

In my walks to and from the hospital, I sometimes fix myself at the side of the sea, or on the border of the river, and there forgetting the scene around me, and being hushed into calm reflection, by the soft undulation of the waves, or the gentle gliding of the stream, I contemplate, in solitude, the awful, and peculiarly critical situation in which I am placed ! I behold the responsibility of an important department pressing upon me—crowds of sick lifting up their dying eyes to me for relief—officers watching, in earnest solicitude, my slightest complainings—soldiers looking towards me with anxiety for my safety, and all who are near me regarding me with the most lively concern—each seeming to express himself sensible how much his health, and even his life, may soon depend upon the care and exertions of an individual !

Pursuing these reflections I sometimes fall into a profound reverie, from which I always return with new impressions of the magnitude of the task allotted me, and with new resolves to exert my utmost efforts in the execution of it ; although I feel both humbled and afflicted in knowing that my utmost powers can offer only a feeble resistance to the yellow-visaged destroyer, who now wields his autumn scythe amongst us.

I lately obtained the consent of the commanding officer, and had, in the hope of preventing, or alleviating ills, which it is so difficult to remedy, prevailed upon a party of soldiers to place themselves under my direction, in order to try what might be the effect of some prophylactic means, either in keeping off the attack of the disease, or in rendering its symptoms milder ; but after only a few days observance of the plan I advised, some of the men happening to feel a little uneasy from the medicine, they all swore they would not be *killed, while they were well*, to oblige either the captain or the doctor, and, refusing to persevere, completely frustrated my endeavours, and prevented me from ascertaining what might have been the fair result of the trial.

Our diet-table at the hospital is of late very much improved, in consequence of the planters, of the neighbouring estates, having agreed to take it by turns to supply us with fresh provisions for two days in each week. It is not usual for Englishmen to esteem plain beef or mutton a luxury—but such we really find it here, and, when we meet with it, we feast upon it, and enjoy it as a high and particular treat.

LETTER. IX.

Visit to Major Prauél's. Evening scene of a burning forest.

Remark respecting the combustion of the woods at night. Visit to Mynbeer Bercheych. Mode of travelling. Figure and address of Mynbeer Bercheych. Situation and construction of his dwelling. Account of his late plantation Gorcum. Stock of cattle and poultry. Gin and pipes and sugar not esteemed as necessaries of life. Water and Madeira wine the only liquids used. Males only admitted as visitors. The females numerous, handsome, and of various races and colours. An uncommonly handsome family of negroes. M. Bercheych kind and humane, though rigid towards his slaves:—of formal and dignified manner:—in conversation affable, lively and instructive. Neatness of his cottage-home. The dairy, and poultry-yard. M. Bercheych associates familiarly with the Indians. Accuracy in shooting with the bow and arrow. He presents the author with some specimens of natural history, and of Indian implements. The visit highly gratifying. M. Bercheych, attended by two of his coloured nymphs, accompanies the party to the canoe, at the time of their departure. Moonlight return down the river and across the cotton fields to the barracks.

Mahaica, Sept.

A considerable proportion of the officers' messes, from the Lancaster barracks, have lately been to dine with Major Prauél, a pleasant in-

habitant of this coast, whose plantation is only a short distance from the fort. The dinner was plentiful, and handsomely served in a large cotton logis, which had been prepared for the purpose, and, being spacious and cool, was far preferable to the house. As we returned in the evening, we witnessed a very grand and brilliant scene from the burning of a part of the forest in order to clear an estate for cultivation. The trees were consuming with great rapidity, and from the fire increasing in brightness as the evening closed in, it formed a most splendid and imposing spectacle. The major observed to us that this improvement of the picture was not the mere effect of viewing it through the surrounding darkness, it being a fact very generally known in this country, that when any part of the woods are set on fire, they burn with greater rapidity during the night than in the daytime. From the greater strength of the breeze throughout the day this might seem improbable; but that fires do burn weaker in strong light is a fact not unknown to the lowest kitchen maid; who, in summer, closes the shutters (as she says) to keep the sun from putting out the fire. Still it cannot be conceded that it is the particular property of the

fun to prevent bodies from burning. Perhaps your chemical reading will furnish you with an explanation of the fact, from the known tendency of light to preserve oxygen in its gaseous state, and to prevent the decomposition of the atmospheric air, which is so essential to combustion. The fire appeared very beautiful, and might be seen to the distance of many miles. It arrested our attention for a considerable time, and we contemplated it as an object of grandeur and novelty.

The officers kindly wishing to divert me, in some degree, from the distressful duties of fatigue and anxiety with which I have been lately surrounded, and which, they persuade themselves, are destroying me, have also insisted upon my accompanying a party of them on a visit to Mynheer Bercheych, one of the most eccentric and remarkable characters upon this coast—an old gentleman, who by uncommon industry has formed a cotton plantation at the most remote point of the colony, where he lives, amidst negroes and wild Indians, almost secluded from the world.

We first rode the distance of some miles, across rich plains of cotton, to the house of

Mr. Graham, situated immediately upon the bank of the river, about midway between the fort and M. Bercheych's. Here we found a party of slaves in waiting, with a large handsome canoe sent by M. Bercheych, for the purpose of conveying us the remainder of the journey. The tide serving, we made no delay, but taking Mr. Graham into the canoe with us, proceeded forthwith on our route. After an hour and quarter of hard paddling up the river, we turned into a narrow canal, and were pulled a considerable distance further, by the slaves running upon the bank with a rope fastened to the canoe. This canal leads to the house, and serves as the boundary of M. Bercheych's estate. It is continued from a deep savanna at the back of the dwelling, and runs along the border of the plantation to the river, into which it conveys its waters, and prevents the inundation of the estate. At one spot we were obliged to quit the canoe, while the slaves dragged it over land, in order to pass a bridge and a sluice which interrupted our passage. On the opposite side of these we resumed our seats, and proceeded towards the house, which is at the further part of the estate. On seeing us approach, M. Bercheych walked out to meet us ;

and, on coming near to us, he hailed us with a most reverential salutation. We immediately left the canoe, and walked with him upon the bank of the canal to the house.

His person and address were strongly impressive, being at once graceful and dignified, although such as to convey an idea of the rigid precision of a formal old square-toes. Much had been reported to us of the situation, and the man, whose eccentricity is become proverbial in the colony. Our visit, therefore, was one of high curiosity, and we did not return without experiencing very ample gratification.

M. Bercheych is a remarkably fine old man. He is robust and square-built, of hale countenance and sturdy form—very erect in his carriage, and possessing uncommon activity, together with great bodily strength, and vast energy of mind. From his figure and the formality of his address, he appears to be stern and unbending, but in reality he is affable, jocular, and communicative, and has nothing of the cold reserve of his country about him. He met us dressed in coat, waistcoat, and breeches of nankeen, all cut in the true an-

sique ; a very large and almost cardinal hat, of white beaver ; shoes well squared at the extremities, and fastened with a pair of plain small buckles ; a long staff in his hand, and his knuckles ornamented with deep ruffles. As he walked his staff and right hand ruffle made an extensive sweep, describing a wide circle ; his step was firm and decisive, the tail of his coat moved with an important swing from side to side, in unison with the majestic sway of his body—and his general air was commanding and dignified. On arriving at the house, he welcomed all the party individually, going through the ceremony of deliberately taking each by the hand, and bowing to him with the profoundest politeness and urbanity ; shewing, at the same time, every mark of respect and hospitality to the whole body. Wine was immediately set before us, for our refreshment after the journey, and we took our seats in a cool romantic little cottage, which, in appearance, and in the simplicity of its structure, might have vied with the dwelling of a hermit. Its walls were built with the caudices of the leaves of a fine species of palm called Eta, which in substance are lighter than cane. These were placed together perpendicularly, and resembled a

number of well-arranged columns or small pillars, which were divided and supported, at intervals, by others of the bamboo, somewhat larger ; nor were any of them concealed or defaced with paint, paper, or stucco, but all were exposed in the naked simplicity of their original form. The partitions dividing the rooms were of similar structure ; the floors were of brick ; the windows, simple openings in the walls ; and the furniture of plain wood, unadorned. In point of situation too, this native little cottage might have been a hermit's fit abode ; for it is placed at the border of a wild savanna, overhung with heavy and impenetrable forests, and far removed from the busy tumult of the world.

The estate is at the greatest depth from the sea, being the most distant that has yet been cultivated upon the Mahaica creek, consequently it is most in the forest, and nearest to the wild Indians. Deep and unexplored woods reach near to the door : before the windows grow cotton bushes and bananas : a small canal passes by the side of the cottage : and the only extensive view is over a wild savanna, carrying the eye, even beyond its reach, in unbroken range between the savage forests.

Here lives a man of refined manners, and a most active mind, cultivated by education, and improved by having lived in polished and fashionable society. M. Bercheych is one of the oldest inhabitants of the colony of Demarara, having resided in this settlement when it consisted of only two plantations; but since that period he has passed fifteen years in Holland, where he lived in considerable splendour, spent his time amidst the best society, and entered into all the gaiety and dissipation of the Hague. After his return to this coast, he occupied himself in cultivating a large estate called Gorcum, and, personally, engaged in all the toil and fatigue of a planter. At this time his great amusement, and the chief relaxation from his labours, consisted in domesticating fishes, and the wild birds of the forest, in which he succeeded to the astonishment of all who visited his home.

By whistling when he fed them, he trained the fishes not barely to rise to the surface of the water at his call, but even to leap from the pond, and eat out of his hand: and from taking the eggs of the birds and breeding up their young, or taking the young, and breeding them up in the house, then

suffering them to hop out and in at pleasure, and to fly to the woods as soon as they were able, he taught them to return freely to the house for food ; in which visits they were sometimes accompanied by others, who came to partake of their fare ; and thus by constant feeding and attention, he, at length, brought many of them to be so tame that they would fly in at the window of his room, and sit upon pegs, fixed up for the purpose, to warble a song ; or, at his time of dinner, they would come in, and perch upon his head or his shoulder to partake of his meal.

You will grieve to hear that after he had built the house, cultivated the fields, and ornamented the garden—after he had trained the fishes into acquaintances, and taught the birds to be his companions—in short, after he had adorned this delightful home, and fashioned it to his taste, he was compelled, by hard necessity, to dispose of the heart-loved abode which his hands had formed, in order to defray the incumbrances its improvements had created.

Being deprived of his favorite Gorcum, his active mind, ever fertile in resources,

fought new employment in the cultivation of the rude spot which forms his present home, and which is now so improved as to yield a fertile produce in cotton. . . Until very recently he had lived at a different part of the estate, where he had built a house; and near to it planted a garden, which yielded a plentiful supply of choice fruits and vegetables; but from the plantation becoming extensive, he finds it expedient to establish his residence at a more central part of it: he has therefore built this romantic little cottage, to serve as a temporary home, from whence he may conveniently superintend the erection of a more spacious, and more permanent abode, at a spot already marked out for that purpose.

Of his mode of living the shortness of our visit allowed us but little opportunity to judge. If not sumptuous, it was at least liberal, for his garden and estate afford a very ample supply of plain and wholesome provisions. His flocks and herds were numerous, and his plantation exhibited a more abundant stock of cows, sheep, and poultry than was common at other estates. For dinner he gave us both mutton and beef, each very excellent of its kind. The desert con-

sifted of eggs and some uncommonly fine figs. Madeira wine was our drink. This and water form the whole list of liqueurs at the home of the hospitable Bercheych. Neither rum, brandy, Hollands nor any other kind of spirit does he ever use. Beer is equally unknown at his table. Punch he never drinks, and he remarked that he had therefore no occasion for sugar, which is accordingly unknown in his family as an article of consumption. Not being in the habit of using any, he does not buy it, nor is a single grain of it to be found in his house. But what will be deemed still more strange, is that, although a Dutchman, he never smokes; nor has under his roof either pipes or tobacco.

We were served only by females, of whom M. Bercheych has the finest assemblage I have yet seen among the people of colour. We learned that it was one of the peculiarities of our host not to suffer a male to inhabit his house. His attendants are all of the feminine gender, and, from their hands, both himself and his guests receive the offerings of his bounty. His habits are social: but men are only admitted as visitors. In other respects also he differs from those lonely

beings to whom, from its retirement and simplicity, his neat little cell might have belonged. He is not a solitary recluse, nor does he deny himself the enjoyments of life. For the beau sexe he has strong attachments, and he does not hold it needful to forego the gratification of his passions. His cottage is a rich seraglio—himself the sultan. A finer collection of half-naked belles it were difficult to meet with. They consist of Indians, negroes, mulattoes, and a finely formed race between the inhabitants of the woods and the blacks. One of the mulattoes, from her dress and ornaments, appeared to be the reigning sultana of the day. The number of females about the cottage was sixteen or seventeen, all well selected, and the most beautiful of their race. Six or seven of them are of an age to acknowledge the kind smiles of their lord; the others are growing up, one above another, in succession, so that each in her turn will probably become the favorite slave of their majestic seignor. A Turkish sultan, selecting from his best dominions, might not boast of finer forms, nor of more obedient and devoted slaves than these of the stately Bercheych; who has all the advantage of seeing the virgins of his haram grow up under his own eye, knowing them

to be his sole and absolute property—not merely the slaves of his passions, but also of his caprice and his fortune.

Among the female property of M. Bercheych we saw an uncommonly handsome family of negroes, consisting of three generations, very strongly resembling each other in feature, from the grand-daughter of three years old, to the grand-mother upwards of sixty. They were all of fine form, and in face very unlike the common race of negroes, having neither the thick lip, the large mouth, nor the wide flat nose. Their features were regular, their noses prominent, and somewhat aquiline, and their teeth and eyes peculiarly fine. The old woman was strong and healthy, of active upright figure, and without any marks of advanced age. The daughter was the cottage-cook, a tall neat-looking woman about thirty years old, whose face and person were strikingly handsome. Four of the grand-daughters were present—all pretty, and in feature the very images of the mother and grand-mother—the eldest was about sixteen years of age, and both in face and form by far the loveliest nymph we had seen of her colour—so beautiful indeed as to

dispute the palm of the *feraglio*. No doubt the good old grand-mother will have early occasion to witness the further diffusion of her semblance in the fourth generation. The whole family were peculiarly neat and clean in their persons, and highly respectful in their behaviour towards others. Although slaves, they were as respectable, and observed as much of propriety and decorum in their conduct, as the best regulated domestics of Europe : in fine they did honor to the excellent regulations and discipline of their owner ; whose home, and every thing about it, is exemplary in point of neatness and order.

The old gentleman is rigid and imperative towards his slaves, but his government is so tempered with kindness and humanity, that he is obeyed more from esteem, than from fear or compulsion. In the observances of politeness Mynheer Bercheych descends to the correctest minutiae. From his appearance, his manners, address, and stately carriage, he might pass for an old English baron. The formal system of bowing, he supports with the tenacity of a very Dutchman. Not a true-born son of all-bowing hat-lifting Leyden itself, could be more precisely polite. He

even requires, and returns a ceremonious salutation every time that he is met or passed by any of his slaves—not one of whom dares to go by him without being uncovered. A negro belonging to another planter attempted to pass him without offering the necessary salute, and he immediately gave him a stripe with his cane, observing that if he did not know good manners he must be taught; then turning to us, he said, “gentlemen, if even a slave bows to me, I take off my own hat in return, because I would not suffer a negro to shew more of politeness and good manners than myself; but if he attempts to pass me without proper observance, I always deem it right to instruct him that respect is due to the whites.”

The afternoon passed away very pleasantly, the conversation being enlivened by the sprightliness and vivacity of our host, who entertained us with a fund of anecdote regarding a variety of subjects, such as the negroes and Indians—his own situation and pursuits—his talents in shooting, as well with the common arrow, and the poisoned arrow, as with the gun and the pistol—his industry in cultivating new land—his perseverance in

domesticating birds and fishes—the treatment of his slaves—his conduct respecting his son, and many other subjects. We found him a well-bred intelligent man, and were pleased to remark, that although he lives in a manner secluded from the world, amidst wild men and slaves, and uncultured beings of various crosses and complexions, giving loose to his favorite passion, and indulging his appetites in all of native freedom, he still preserves the dignity of a gentleman, and displays all the superiority of a well-educated and enlightened mind. From his manners, and his years, he is highly respectable, as also from his talents, and unwearied industry. The first impression, arising from his figure and address, is that of a stern justice of the peace, or a rigid country esquire of the old school : but the reserve of his exterior is soon removed by the ease and affability of his conversation. He is particularly well versed in the history and policy of these settlements, and we derived both instruction and amusement from his remarks. Indeed we found him altogether so interesting as to wish the hours we passed in his society could have been lengthened into days, and were grieved when the moment arrived for taking our departure. For my own part I may aver

that I have seldom spent a few hours with equal gratification and improvement ; or in many respects so congenial to my wishes ; for so entertaining were his anecdotes, and so instructive and intelligent his narratives, that I could have lent a willing ear from Sunday morning to Saturday night. At the same time some parts of his history caused feelings of sorrow and concern, particularly the pathetic account of his being compelled to abandon his improvements at Gorcum, which had been the cherished offspring of his toil, and the fond solace of his cares. Although marks of eccentricity of character certainly betrayed themselves, and some errors of discretion might be traced, still we could not but contemplate M. Bercheych as great in misfortune, and philosophical in retirement.

Nothing could exceed the neatness of arrangement which displayed itself about his little cottage home. Plainness and simplicity prevailed throughout, but a palace could not be cleaner, nor maintained in greater order. A small dairy, of exquisite contrivance, was most delicately fitted up, and appeared delightfully fresh and cool ; a little poultry yard, enclosed with a fancy paling, was a perfect model of

taste—and every thing around exhibited some mark of excellence—some testimony of having courted the ingenious hand of its industrious and eccentric owner.

Around the cottage he has cut a deep wet fosse, which forms a protecting barrier, and prevents any person from approaching his residence, but by way of a narrow plank placed across the ditch, directly in front of the dwelling; and so extremely rigid is he in his exclusion of male-beings, that not even a negro is allowed to cross this plank without first obtaining his express leave. In the plan of the new house which he intends to erect, is an encircling ditch or moat of fourteen or sixteen feet wide, which he expects will prove complete defence to his retired seraglio.

From living so much among the Indians M. Bercheych is well acquainted with their manners and customs, and feels himself quite at home amidst them. He amused us by shooting with the Indian bow and arrow, and we were surprised to observe with what accuracy he was able to hit his mark. He very kindly presented me with some specimens in natural history—also some of the

native productions of Indian manufacture, and very obligingly offered to procure me a model of an Indian house, made by some of the bucks. This, with such other specimens as I may collect, I shall hope, some day or other, to have the pleasure of shewing you in England.

Delighted with the cottage, and still more interested with the man, we let the evening close in upon our reluctant departure, and had to avail ourselves of the moon as a guide in our return down the river. We walked some distance at the side of the canal before we came to the canoe; and were accompanied to the place of embarkation by M. Bercheych, followed by two of his fine cottage nymphs, who were directed to attend with some wine glasses and two bottles of Madeira. One of these was to be emptied to the success of the new home, on reaching the place, where it was to be erected: the other was to supply the parting-glass on our stepping into the canoe. These ceremonies were accordingly observed in due form, and after seeing us safely seated and afloat, the friendly Bercheych bade us cordially good night, earnestly entreating us soon to repeat our visit.

He then bowed to us as profoundly as on our arrival, and placing himself between his two tender supporters, trod back his path in sultanic step, to his fond and sequestered retreat.

The tide being again in our favor, the slaves paddled us with great speed down the river as far as Mr. Graham's, and there, quitting the canoe, the major and myself took our chaise, and the other gentlemen their horses, and we finished this delightful day by a pleasant moonlight ride across the cotton fields to our barracks.

LETTER X.

Author addresses his friend by means of some officers returning to England. Laments the uncertainty of his situation on account of not being able to receive letters from Europe. British property expended in the improvement of the captured settlements. Tranquillity of the colonies. Occasional alarm from the approach of strange ships. Disease still prevalent. Unfavorable report which might be made by the officers returning to England. Better prospects. Author regrets not being able to improve the report, by the present occasion. Description of persons most frequently attacked with fever. Examples of sudden seizure. Case of Chapman, a grenadier of the 99th regiment. A more happy scene. Another pleasing event participated by two affectionate slaves. The negroes said to be disobedient in consequence of British lenity. Examples.

Mahaica, Sept. 4.

AN opportunity now offers of addressing you by a conveyance which holds out every probability of my letter reaching you in safety. The 93d and 99th regiments being draughted into the 39th, the officers are about to return to England, and I commit my letter to the care of one of these gentlemen, who will be good enough to see it delivered. Would I could propose any means equally probable of

my receiving tidings from you ! But I am sorry to observe, that all our former uncertainties remain. We are still in the same state of suspense, continuing between the two staffs of the Charibbee islands and of St. Domingo, as if belonging to neither—at the same time expecting daily to be ordered to Hispaniola, yet without any intimation when we are to be relieved. Under these circumstances, I can only say as before, continue to address to me at the head quarters of the St. Domingo army : I may then have the hope of some day or other meeting all your remembrances.

It is now a whole year since I left London, and ten long months have passed away since my departure from England, during which time I have not heard from any of the friends I left behind. To them I have written in frequent remembrance, but from not hearing in return, I am subjected to all the uncertainty and apprehension of my letters not having arrived, although I fondly flatter myself that some of the many I have forwarded must have been received.

Of news you will expect but little from this quarter. We hold quiet possession of the

colonies which surrendered to us, and the cultivation and commerce is prosecuted with as much industry as though we were resting in the bosom of peace. Great numbers of slaves have been imported, since our arrival, and British property is employed to extend and improve the settlements, with no less ardor than might be expected if these valuable possessions were confirmed to England by a definitive treaty, guaranteed by the strongest powers in Europe.

Although we are left in tranquillity by the enemy, we have, occasionally, some temporary alarms, from the appearance of strange ships of war off the coast, but commonly, before the troops have had time to assemble at their posts, our fears are dispelled by discovering the vessels to be of our own nation.

How sincerely do I wish, that I could report as favorably respecting the interruptions caused by another of our foes—that worst and most fatal enemy, disease ! But alas ! his hostility is fearfully active, and allows us no repose. Against him we are kept every hour upon the alert, or in actual combat ; for not content with threats and menaces, he openly

flies to the attack, and scarcely leaves us a hope of quarter. Engaged in the service of an insatiate commander, he proves himself the too faithful page of hungry death.

The gentlemen now returning from these colonies to England will not have it in their power to give a very pleasing picture of the country or the climate, for it has happened that the whole of the time they have passed here has been divided between the wet season and the season of sickness. Their account might, therefore, be comprized in few words, by telling their friends, that *Guiana is a country of wet ditches, and muddy roads, inhabited by disease and death!* But although this would be a true description, it would not be a fair one, for the dry season is now setting in, and we are assured, that bright Hygeia will soon chase away our maladies, the country become pleasant—the roads peculiarly good—and the climate genial and salubrious. Already indeed we have been without rain for several days, and the steady breeze, increased in strength, promises, in alliance with powerful Phœbus, to subdue the lethal vapours of this unkindly season.

I lament exceedingly that it is not in my power to announce to you, by the present occasion, some progress in the health-improvement which we are led to anticipate : we observe that the men are most frequently attacked during, or immediately after exposure to great heat or fatigue. The more robust and plethoric—those occupied as cooks, or blacksmiths,—boat parties—men occupied in fishing—non-commissioned officers—sentinels—and those who have been employed as servants to officers, have been most subject to the disease. In particular a boat party, employed to fetch water down the river for the use of the hospital and the barracks, have been so invariably attacked in a kind of succession upon that duty, that it has been found necessary to procure a crew of negroes for this express purpose. It has also been deemed requisite to abandon the comfort derived from the occasional supply of an article of fresh provision, in consequence of the men who were employed to draw the seine for fish, being found peculiarly susceptible of the fever.

The speed with which the attack succeeds the exposure to great heat and fatigue is no less remarkable, in many instances, than

the rapidity with which, in these or other cases, the disease runs on to death. Only yesterday morning, in returning from the hospital to my breakfast, I was accosted, on passing the soldiers' barrack, and requested to visit the drum-major, whom I found dangerously ill with fever; although on my way to the hospital, but a short time before, I had seen him walking in the cotton field apparently, and to his own belief, as well as any man in the regiment. At the same time I was desired to look at a soldier, who was lying at the side of the drum-major, and was said to be complaining. This man also proved to be in a dangerous state of fever, and on inquiry, I learned that he had been attacked the day before, immediately after hurrying nearly a mile to fetch some porter. I likewise saw two or three others, in the same barrack, who had been suddenly taken ill on guard, and were now about to increase our crowded list at the hospital.

A few days ago, on my passing by the guard-house, I observed a grenadier, named Chapman, sitting among the men who were upon guard, seemingly unwell; and on my asking him if he was sick, he answered in a firm strong voice, that he felt "*a little poorly with*

head-ach, but not ill ;" still I perceived that he had more of indisposition about him, than he was aware of, and I was the more particularly led to notice any symptoms of disease in this man from his having been repeatedly an object of conversation and remark, in health. He was a hardy robust grenadier, and from having been much exposed on fatigue-duty in Ireland, during the time of the sickness which the troops had experienced at Spike Island and at Cove ; from having supported much of similar duty on the passage ; and also a considerable share since his arrival in the West Indies, without suffering from it, the officers had pointed him out to me, as a person who was " secure against *even yellow-fever, and the doctors.*" He was sitting in his usual clothing, talking to the men of the guard, sensible only of slight head-ach, and lassitude : but as I saw evidently that it was an attack of fever, without mentioning this to him, I hinted that it would be better he should go to the hospital, if he was at all unwell, in order that he might have the benefit of medical attendance, and of such remedies as his case required. He instantly expressed great alarm, and said, "*I am not ill : if you take me to the hospital, I shall catch the fever and die.*"—On my stating the impropri-

ety of his remaining among the well men, and not using the proper means of recovery, he replied "*I am not sick, and only want an appetite to be quite well,*" and when I urged him further to go into the hospital, he answered with quickness, "*Indeed I am not bad; and if I was, I would rather stab myself at once, than go where so many are dying every day of yellow fever.*" Poor fellow! he was wholly unconscious, that the disease, he so much dreaded, was upon him—and as I found that his terror of the hospital was quite insurmountable, I did not augment his alarm, either by insisting upon his being carried thither, or by telling him that the fever had already seized him; but in order that he might be removed from the guard-room, I gave directions for a hammock to be put up under the piazza of the house, where he might be in quiet, and entirely alone. This being done, without delay, I prevailed upon him to go directly, and lie down, and was glad to see him safe in bed; for, in my conversation with him, I had discovered enough to cause strong apprehensions lest he should die, amidst the men of the guard, before we could have him removed! Although he felt so little of illness, and those around him were so wholly insensible of his peril, there was an indefinable

ble something about him, particularly in his countenance, which bespoke extreme danger ; and from which the eye of experience might see that he was soon to die ! After having him placed in the hammock, and prescribing for him such remedies as were necessary, I instructed the medical gentlemen, who had lately arrived at this post to give me assistance, to pay particular attention to his case, remarking, that from his present appearance, I should not be surprized if, in the course of an hour or two, I should learn that he was dead. The event verified my suspicions : a convulsive tremor of the muscles quickly seized him, and at noon he was a corpse ! Such are the fevers of this climate ! Often a man is well in the morning, and at night is no more : nor is it possible for any one, who has not seen many cases of the disease, to judge of the degree of danger which threatens those who are attacked. Chapman had been one of the party employed to drag the fishing net in the sea, and I have been the more minute in relating his case, because, in him, the circumstances I have mentioned were strikingly exemplified. He was a man who possessed great strength of constitution—had been exposed to the heat of the sun immediately previous to the at-

tack—and was very rapidly destroyed by the disease.

But you will tell me not to dwell on tales of sadness and distress ; I therefore obey, and hasten to lead you to a scene of joy and gladness, in which I am sure your heart will cordially participate : but the powers of description fail me, and I ought to invoke superior aid to assist my pen in representing what my bosom felt. I had ordered the convalescents to be assembled, from all the different wards and hospitals, and paraded upon the beach, that I might carefully inspect them, in order to judge what number were fit to be removed to a distant post for change of air and place ; and to give room at the hospital for the better accommodation of the sick—and the pleasure which I witnessed upon the countenances of these poor men, and which swelled at my own heart, on the occasion, was far greater than words can tell. A very considerable body of pale, feeble, and emaciated beings were brought together, and, being drawn up, on the parade, they hailed each other, in cheerful greetings, like men raised from the dead. Joy gladdened every eye ; the comrade hailed his friend as one returned from the grave ; all were happy, and

the delight of again seeing each other, shone in every face. The meeting was an exhilarating cordial to them. Mirth and liveliness spread around—wit and repartee prevailed, and they addressed each other, in quaint jokes, and comic gratulations, descriptive of their late dangers, and their present escape. This effect of bringing them together gave me great pleasure, and on seeing so numerous a body saved from the very jaws of death, I was no less delighted than the happiest of the party. Their appearance was distressful, and their pallid ghastly visages, and emaciated figures to men less conversant with the more direful examples of disease, might have conveyed the idea of speedy dissolution, rather than of approaching health: but to those who had themselves been in a far worse state, and who had long been lying, surrounded with the sick and the dying, no appearances could be dispiriting, while they and their comrades were able to support themselves upon their legs.

I may likewise mention to you another instance, which has lately afforded me a high degree of pleasure. On making my evening visit one night at the hospital, as I approached I heard a loud screaming from one of the patients,

whom I found struggling in violent convulsions, and apparently sinking into the arms of death. His pulse was feeble and tremulous, his countenance collapsed, and his extremities cold. More with the view of preventing the other patients from fancying that we could neglect any one, when he seemed most to require our aid, than from any hope of relieving him, I directed the cold aspersion, with blisters, and volatiles to be administered—fully expecting to find him dead at my next visit. On my way to the hospital the following morning, I overtook two very decent female slaves, a black and a mulatto, who were going, they said, to visit *Joseph*; and on my learning that Joseph was the patient I had seen so ill in the evening, I advised them to go back, telling them, that I feared they were too late to see him alive. They were extremely affected at the news, but still proceeded to the hospital, and not less to their surprize than mine, found the poor man able to receive them with a smile, and to speak to them.

I partook most cordially in their joy at seeing him so much recovered, and had additional pleasure in observing with what delight and satisfaction these happy slaves gave to

their refuscitated favorite several little pledges of tenderness, such as a bit of sugar-cane, two or three green oranges, and other things to moisten his fevered lips. Joseph still remains in the hospital, and you will feel assured that he receives the most assiduous attention both from myself, and the two kind slaves, who sympathize in his sufferings; and although he is not yet out of danger, we are not without the hope of seeing him restored to health and his friends.

We are told by the planters, that since the arrival of the English in these colonies, the people of colour are grown unusually disobedient, and even insolent; which is attributed to our being more lenient towards them than their Dutch masters. Whether or not this be admitted as the cause, it has happened, that two very recent instances have occurred in proof of the fact, and which have made it necessary to use means of correcting their daring presumption. Consistent with the rules of the fort, the officer on guard is instructed to examine every vessel that passes, in order to ascertain whither she is bound, and with what cargo freighted. Yesterday a boat going from Mahaica creek resisted the orders of the

guard, and, in defiance of the sentinel, attempted to pass without bringing to. After hailing her several times in vain, the soldier was directed to fire into her, which being promptly obeyed, the crew became intimidated, and let go the anchor. The master was then desired to come on shore to give an account of his vessel and cargo, and to explain his conduct; when it proved that none but people of colour were on board, and that this insulting disobedience of the rules of the fort was their own act. It was therefore deemed necessary to make an example of the mulatto commander, in order to shew the slaves that such disrespect would not escape with impunity. The crew were accordingly brought on shore, and made to witness the punishment of their commander; who was laid down before them and flogged by one of the negro drivers belonging to the fort.

This morning another vessel was hailed from the battery, yet she most daringly proceeded on her passage, in despite of the sentinel and the whole of the guard. Finding that she did not bring to, on being repeatedly hailed, the sentinel was ordered to fire upon her, which he did three times without the

crew paying any regard to it : on which one of the cannon was fired from the battery. This was likewise disregarded, and their temerity still led them on. Another gun was then fired loaded with grape-shot. Still they were heedless of the danger, and proceeded in defiance of every attempt to bring them to an anchor. The breeze was strong, and availing themselves of its fullest effect, they were out of reach before a third shot could overtake them.

We are informed that a system of smuggling was carried on to a great extent upon this coast, previous to the colonies falling into our possession, and that a very considerable proportion of the produce found its way to the English market, notwithstanding the watchfulness of the Dutch colonial government ; possibly it was from this adventurous traffic that the slaves acquired a disrespect of orders, rather than from the lenity of the present rulers of the colonies.

LETTER XI.

Delayed departure of officers returning to England. The surgeon and assistant detained at Demarara on duty. Destination of the author, and the other gentlemen of the St. Domingo staff still uncertain. Diet of salt meat and vegetables. Author removes from Mahaica to La Bourgade. The season begins to improve—the high malignity of the fever to decline. The disease takes on an intermittent form. Lingerin^g cases fatal—not those recently admitted. Irregular type of the fever. A colonial surgeon appointed to the South American Rangers. His remarks strengthen an observation before stated by the author. His inexperience. Some remarks concerning the diseases requiring surgical treatment. Zeal and attention of Mr. Blackader. Progress of ulcers. Patients sent to England. Dutch troops sickly. Nature of the disease. Case of the Dutch chirurg^{eon} major. Medical assistant drowned at Maiconuy. Demarara gazette. South American Rangers. A white colonial corps.

La Bourgade, Sept. 12.

THE delayed departure of the officers whose regiments have been draughted, affords me an opportunity of addressing to you some additional notes by the same conveyance. They have been detained in the expectation that some of them might have remained with the 39th regiment, in order to have increased its strength in officers, in proportion to its increase of privates; but the Commander in Chief not

acceding to this arrangement, they are all ordered to embark without loss of time for England, and to take with them the serjeants and drums; yet on account of the extreme urgency of this sickly period, and the very limited number of assistants we have for hospital duty, we are allowed to detain the surgeon and mate of the 99th regiment, without whom indeed we must have been reduced to the greatest distress; for the surgeon of this regiment has been my best support from the time of our arrival, being the only commissioned medical officer I have had with me, during the whole of our busy service in these colonies.

Respecting the destination of the other gentlemen of the hospital staff and myself, I have nothing new to add. Incertitude is still the order of the day. We remain without receiving either pay or allowances, and subsist almost wholly upon our salt rations. Fortunately this is one of the few countries where but little money is required, or I should rather say, where if a man had much it might be difficult to spend it. Fruit and vegetables are abundant, but the riches of Cræsus could not procure a regular supply of fresh animal pro-

visions for our table. For my own part I am become so much a creole, and so fond of plantains, that I should experience but little hardship were these the only food.

You will perceive from this letter, that I have again changed my home : and you will probably conclude that the number of sick is now greater at La Bourgade than at Mahaica, in which you will be correct. After I had separated the happy group of convalescents from the sick, and removed them to distant quarters upon the coast, I left the patients then remaining at Mahaica under the care of Mr. Ord, acting surgeon to the 39th regiment, and returned to take charge of the hospital, at our greater depot at La Bourgade : and it is with infinite satisfaction that I feel myself able to inform you that the high malignity of the disease begins to yield to the approach of a more benign season. Since my return hither, several patients have been admitted in whom the fever appears under an intermittent type: Were it possible to divest myself of the regret I feel on account of the poor men's sufferings, and from our sick-list being by any cause increased, I might truly say that I received these cases with plea-

sure, hailing them as a pledge that our worst foe has run his span ; for if his pulse begins to intermit, it may be, in him as in other subjects, a symptom of approaching dissolution. But to speak without a metaphor, if the fever should assume a *remittent*, or an *intermittent* course, we shall know how to oppose ourselves to its progress, and to prevent it from repeating the devastations it has committed in its *continued* form.

But the hospital is still sadly crowded, and from the return made to me of the last week, the proportion of casualties does not seem to be yet diminished, although I can perceive that they now arise less from cases recently admitted, than from the lingering remains of more violent disease. At the same time I may remark, that it is only from receiving a considerable proportion of intermittents at once that we are led to hope the fever is changing to a milder type, for repeated examples occurred, at Mahaica, of different patients being brought to the hospital at the same period, with the disease under all the varied forms of *intermittent*, *remittent*, and *continued* fever, yet each of them were occasionally converted into the most malignant

“*yellow fever*,” and rapidly terminated in death.

In forming the appointments to the new raised corps of South American Rangers, it was deemed an acquisition to find a medical practitioner of the colony who would accept the surgency. The gentleman who received the appointment has lately requested me to visit the serjeant-major, and several other patients, in fever, under his treatment; and he expressed great astonishment when I remarked that he had called me too late to be of any service to them, and acknowledged to me that he had not thought them in such extreme danger, *never having seen* the disease so rapid or sudden before, but having for the most part readily cured his patients with the bark. Had he practised long in the army, or among persons recently arrived, these cases would have created no surprize; it was evident therefore that his sick-list had been much confined to creoles and negroes, in whom the fever is commonly less severe; and this fact stands in confirmation of a remark I made to you in a former letter—that from their situations many of the colonial practitioners can have but little opportunity of seeing the dis-

ease in its concentrated form of *yellow fever*. I should remark however that the experience of this gentleman had not been such as to entitle him, in any peculiar degree, either to the recommendation or the appointment with which he was honored. He had been only a short time in the colony, and had not been called into extensive professional employment.

Amidst all the afflicting histories of this distressful malady, I should rejoice exceedingly was it in my power to report to you more favorably of the patients under surgical treatment in our hospital; but, unhappily, at the moment of our greatest pressure and anxiety regarding the fever, we are likewise most distressed on account of the patients with sores and ulcers, who likewise feel the sad effects of climate and of season. In speaking upon this subject, I ought to add that the attention of Mr. Blackader, the surgeon, has been unremitted; and that his abilities are not less eminent than his zeal. His patients have been watched with an anxious care, and he has been indefatigable in his endeavours to relieve them; and the more so from their sufferings having been peculiarly noticed, and the frequent subject of our conversation. We are willing to hope that the

unhappy difficulties he has met with in his practice may be more the effect of season than of climate, and that as the fevers grow milder with finer weather, the wounds and ulcers will also assume a more healthy disposition.

Whether from a wound, a scratch, the bite of a musquito, or the simplest excoriation, the progress of the sore has been marked, and the same. It, at first, seems to go on kindly, gradually advancing in a healing state, but before it is quite well, the patient loses his appetite, feels sickly, or is attacked with a febrile paroxysm, and sinks into a state of relaxation and debility; with the skin and muscles flaccid, the countenance pale, and the whole frame languid, and weak. The sore partaking of the general change grows black and foul, and sloughing away becomes wider and deeper than it was at first. After a time, the patient recovers his lost strength, and by the aid of bark, wine, and tonics, the ulcer again assumes a healthy aspect, florid granulations form, and the healing process is renewed. Proceeding now as before it often reaches that state, which creates the daily hope of a new cuticle forming over it to complete the cure: but a febrile exacerbation

again seizes the patient, and the whole disastrous round is repeated. The ulcer extends itself still wider than before, and the energies of the system being further impaired, it is longer ere it throws off its foul sloughings, to take on a clean and healthy appearance.— Yet this does follow, and the now wide and ragged sore again begins to heal. The patient likewise recovers a degree of strength, but remains considerably weakened. The healing of the wound now advances, though slowly, and again holds out fair prospects to the miserable sufferer—but, before it has cicatrized with new skin, he again relapses, the ulcer blackens, becomes foul and offensive, and the parts around are destroyed and slough away to a frightful extent—the patient sinking far below his former debility. He now recovers but a slight degree of strength; and the sore only clears itself to widen its ravages—the appetite is irrecoverable,—extreme lassitude prevails—cough, and hectic fever supervene—and the miserable patient lingers out a few wretched weeks, until death kindly offers him relief. Often the event is more rapid; but it not unfrequently happens that the patient is deluded three, four, or more times with the fairest prospect of recovery,

then, suddenly and without any apparent cause, relapses, growing more and more feeble from each attack, until every energy of the constitution is exhausted.

Having witnessed with extreme pain the cruel sufferings of this class of our patients, we are particularly happy to avail ourselves of the present return of the officers, to put a party of sick, from the surgical wards, under their protection to England, where they will have the chance of speedy recovery, and of soon returning to their duty ; and as our hospitals will be thus considerably relieved, I shall be the better enabled to spare the services of Mr. Beane, one of our most useful assistants, whom I have placed on board to take charge of them upon the passage. I should remark that the season proves almost equally sickly among the Dutch troops as the English, although far less fatal. Among the Hollanders the fever has been milder, and of a remittent type, giving way to the common treatment used in what is termed the bilious remittent fever of the country. The Dutch surgeon-major, who has been many years in the colony, is now upon the sick-list, and in him the fever appears as an intermittent. On calling

to visit him, I found him in a regular paroxysm of ague, the form which the fever very commonly assumes among the creoles, and the negroes.

We have lately had the misfortune to lose another of our assistants, but, although his loss is not the less to be lamented, we have not to charge it to the account of disease. It was the effect of accident. He was stationed at Maiconuy, where he was in the habit of frequently bathing in the river, and one evening as he was taking his favorite exercise of swimming across to the opposite bank, he suddenly disappeared, and was seen no more. We do not learn that any one was bathing with him at the time, but those who have since been here, from that post, inform us that it was generally attributed to an alligator seizing him, and suddenly dragging him down.

The return of our comrades to England gives me an opportunity of sending you the first copy of a new periodical paper, just published in this colony, called the Demarara Gazette. You will find from the composition no less than from the printing, and the paper, that

it is quite an original: but as you are a merciful man, I confide in your not distressing the editors of the London papers, by exhibiting to them, or the English public, the *superiority* of our South American Gazette.

But what will you say of our growing importance when I tell you, that we have not only a newspaper established, to afford us all the commercial advantages of a speedy intercourse and a strong regiment of black rangers raised for the defence of the colony, but that we have also a colonial corps formed from among the respectable part of the inhabitants, for the mutual protection of each other's property, and for the general defence of the settlement. I wish you could witness the grotesque scene of this corps going to parade, with many of the gentlemen indulging in the indolence of climate, by having slaves to carry their firelocks, belts, cartouch-boxes, and the like. You would be apt to suggest comparisons between the warlike troops of Austria or Russia, and these languid soldiers of the West Indies. I am occasionally very much amused on meeting a fat robust figure feathered out with scarlet and blue uniform, and strutting to the parade, with a little negro

boy behind him to support the fatiguing weight of his firelock. A few days since I passed one of these fattened warriors, who went puffing and blowing through the mud, and wiping the heated streams from his brow, as if quite oppressed with the heavy mass of his own person ; while a slim little shade of a negro, scarcely up to his hip, quietly followed at his heel, bending under the weight of his arms and accoutrements. It was a fine burlesque upon the stern hardihood, and the rigid endurance of a military life—yet, when assembled, the Demarara corps makes a respectable and soldier-like appearance, and would no doubt be essentially useful, were occasion to call for its services.

LETTER XII.

The Author narrowly escapes falling a victim to "yellow fever," considers himself initiated, and free of the West Indies. Insidious attack of the disease. Early symptoms. Remedies employed. Symptoms at a later stage. Remedies then used. Author makes his will. Calmly reconciles himself to his seeming fate — but persists in employing his professional means. Is visited by some medical practitioners of the colony. Copious exhibition of the Peruvian bark. Delicious refreshment experienced from wine. Grateful relief from cold-bathing. Exclamation of officers on casting a last look upon the Author. The fifth, the most dangerous day of the disorder. Feelings of horror and distress on the decline of the fever. Seeming change from death to life. The world appears new and uncommon. Author hesitates whether to return to it. Feels some renewal of strength on the 10th day. Convalescent appetite. Author apologises to his friend for troubling him with so much of self. No yellowness during the disease.

Demarara, Sept. 30

ALAS, my friend! the unwilling expectation is at length fulfilled, and I now lift my pen with a hand trembling and enfeebled, almost beyond the power of supporting even a feather! The yellow-visaged monster, who has committed such devastations

amongst us, avenging the efforts I have opposed to his progress, has dealt me a blow, which all who witnessed it, believed to have fallen from the hand of death ; and truly, the shock had well nigh brought me to the still home from whence there is no return. But let me not trespass upon your friendly sympathy by dwelling upon the gloomy shade of the picture :—let me rather hasten to tell you, that the danger is past—that I am a convalescent from a severe attack of the “yellow” fever, and am looking towards returning health. I may also add, further, that from having passed the fiery ordeal, I shall now deem myself quite a *seasoned* creole, and feel that I am entitled to the privileges of West India freedom.

But you will expect the particulars ; I therefore proceed to lay before you the history of my case, while all the circumstances of it are fresh in my recollection, although in truth, I feel them too deeply engraven upon the tablet of my memory ever to be defaced. In perusing them, you will discover that the invasion of the disease was not less insidious, than its progress has been dangerous. On Saturday the 17th inst. excepting only the time occupied in my morning and evening

visits at the hospital, I sat the whole of the day in my room, busily employed in writing. In the evening I felt an aching sensation in the middle of my thighs, which I attributed to sitting so many hours upon a rough wooden chair. At tea time I joined the gentlemen of the hospital-mess, and afterwards invited the surgeon to accompany me in a promenade, in the idea of walking away the uneasy weight which I felt in my limbs; but the exercise failing of success, I bathed and went early to bed, unsuspecting the enemy, who lurked in my veins, and nothing doubting but sleep would prove an effectual remedy. But I was again disappointed, for instead of the uneasy feelings being removed, a severe head-ach and pain of the eyes, with great thirst and dryness of mouth supervened, and I passed a disturbed and restless night. Awakened suspicion now taught me that I was attacked by an enemy much more formidable, than the supposed wooden stool; I therefore took some medicine, and remained in bed until noon: yet from having, several times, experienced similar symptoms, and nearly equal in degree, whilst I was on duty at Mahaica, I was willing to believe that it might be only a false alarm. The medicine produced some relief.

I sat up during the afternoon, and in the evening made my visit, as usual, to the hospital: but feelings of languor and general indisposition were hovering about me, and I returned to my pillow at an early hour, again hoping that the soothing deity of repose would bring me a cure; but a sleepless and most wretched night unveiled the delusion. All the symptoms of disease were highly aggravated, and every sensation assured me that I had now to oppose, in my own person, the insatiate foe, whose ravages upon others I had so frequently deplored. No time was to be lost, and happily I was not dismayed, but confiding in our resources, I resolved to stand the assault, in firm and decided combat; and to a persevering resistance, I feel that I am indebted for the blessing of again addressing you. All the powers of my body seemed to have deserted me, but the faculties of my mind were unimpaired, and I may say that this has been the only period of my life, when I have so conquered my dislike to nauseous doses as for my stomach and my palate to receive them, not only without reluctance, but even as delicious cordials.

All the violence of disease now rushed in

upon me, hurrying on towards rapid destruction. The light was intolerable, and the pulsations of the head and eyes were most excruciating—conveying a sensation as if three or four hooks were fastened into the globe of each eye, and some person, standing behind me, was dragging them forcibly from their orbits back into the head, the cerebrum being, at the same time, detached from its membranes, and leaping about violently within the cranium. A wearying pain occupied my back and limbs, and in particular the calves of my legs, feeling as if dogs were gnawing down to the bones, while a tormenting restlessness possessed my whole frame, and totally prevented the slightest approach to ease or quiet. The skin was burning, and conveyed a pungent sensation when touched : the pulse was quickened but not very full : the tongue was white and parched, with excessive thirst, and constant dryness of the mouth, lips, and teeth. I know not from which I suffered most, the excruciating pain, the insatiable thirst, or the unappeasable restlessness ; for all were equally insupportable, and either of them might have sufficed to exhaust the strongest frame. Combining their tortures, they created a degree of irritation amounting almost to phrensy ; and

which, but for the means used to alleviate it, must have destroyed me in a few hours. No place, nor position afforded a moment's rest. I rolled about the bed—turned every instant from side to side—placed my head high—laid it low—threw my limbs from under the sheet, hung them over the side of the bed—tumbled off the clothes, and moved about incessantly to find a resting place; but all in vain—no ease was to be found, not even a momentary respite was granted from this excessive torment. It was under these symptoms that I requested the surgeon to take twelve or fourteen ounces of blood from my arm, and to give me a strong dose of calomel. This was on Monday morning the 19th. inst., the attack having commenced on the evening of Saturday the 17th. The pain of the head and eyes was considerably relieved by the bleeding,—the restlessness was also in a slight degree diminished—but the thirst, with heat and dryness of skin, still continued. I drank copiously of mild diluents, and the calomel acted freely as an evacuant; but still I had no rest, and passed a third night in extreme suffering, and without sleep. On the 20th the pain was less excruciating, and the light less intolerable; but the other symptoms of fever remained,

together with an increased degree of languor and debility : I therefore avoided further evacuations, and took a saline medicine with camphire. The night was, again, most painfully restless, sleep was wholly denied me, and I felt myself sinking into extreme exhaustion.

In the morning of the 21st. I was free from the high action of fever, the heat and pain had subsided, the pulse was less quick, and I was in a copious perspiration : but the whiteness of tongue remained, with a most harassing and unquenchable thirst; and in proportion as the more violent symptoms abated, others, even more distressing if possible, supervened. My strength and voice were gone; an indescribable uneasiness affected my whole body : I was attacked with an exhausting diarrhæa; felt a most annihilating sensation at the scrobiculus cordis; and sunk into a degree of languor and prostration, not to be conceived.

I passed the day and night, under the most wearisome and distressing sensations, and with my bodily powers so rapidly declining, that I felt more and more enfeebled every

hour. On the 22d scarcely a hope remained of my recovery. Every energy of the system seemed to be subdued, and the languor and prostration of strength had reached their extreme degree.

I now felt that my life only hung by a slender filament, and was conscious that each half-hour might be my last. I was so reduced as to be no longer able to support myself upon my side, in bed ; but lay supine, and prostrate, with my flaccid limbs stretched in full extension, and which, if they were lifted from their place, fell lifeless upon the same spot. A weakening diarrhæa continued, and a still more debilitating vomiting was superadded. Upon the slightest motion I fell into syncope, and was so utterly exhausted as to faint if my head was raised from the pillow. My fauces were parched and dry, and I had the thirst of Tantalus, together with a languid and sinking sensation at the epigastrium, and a most distressful feeling of restlessness and horror, over my whole frame. Every symptom bespoke the utmost debility and loss of strength, and it seemed to require only a sigh to sever the thread of life.

Thus situated, I contemplated the probable event, and having calmly reconciled the thought of dying, I endeavored, in broken whisper, to utter a few words to the surgeon, for him to commit to paper, as my will; to which, with his guidance, a feeble and trembling hand traced my signature, but in characters which I now find to be scarcely legible. This ceremony was executed with the greatest composure of mind, for I was never more collected, nor more tranquil. Death seemed to look me full in the face, at the time, but I received his commands to leave the world without a disturbed emotion. In soft and tender regret, indeed, I lamented that I could not see my friends in England; nor cast a last look of grateful affection upon my beloved mother, before I departed; but these privations, deeply sorrowful as they were, also yielded to what seemed the inflexible decree of fate; and, in tranquil resignation, I breathed a dying blessing to you all. Still, however reconciled to my fate, I felt that I ought not to reject the means of relief which my profession offered, whilst even a possibility remained of being saved, I therefore made myself understood by Mr. Blackader, and expressed a wish to have large quantities of bark and opium,

with wine, and the cold bath. Colonel Hiflop, the commanding officer, actuated by the most amiable feelings, very kindly expressed a wish that I should be visited by some of the medical gentlemen of the country. This was a proposal to which I could form no possible objection ; although my own sensations had dictated the remedies I meant to employ. Two of the most eminent practitioners of the colony were accordingly requested to see me, and it were ungrateful not to express the acknowledgments I owe them for their friendly attention and advice. Happily their opinions very much accorded with my own, respecting the means to be used in the stage of the disease under which they saw me ; and they approved of every part of my prescription, the cold bath only excepted. I was wholly incapable of conversing with them, but their remarks to Mr. Blackader did not escape my ear, and not finding them sufficiently satisfactory to carry conviction to my mind, respecting the impropriety of the bathing, their objections were overruled, and I resolved not to forego, what my own conclusions, as well as my feelings, had represented as a sovereign remedy.

The fierce ardor of fever; the painful throbbing of the head and eyes; and the pungent dryness of skin, were very much diminished; and the pulse, though enfeebled, was not much quicker than in health; the prescribed remedies were, therefore, used with great freedom. Happily the opium quickly arrested the reaching, and also the diarrhæa, which allowed the bark and wine, and bathing to be employed with less reserve; and I persevered with such effect, that in the course of only a few hours, I had no less than *six ounces* of the powder of bark (swallowed and otherwise administered) and a bottle of sound old hock remaining in my stomach and bowels.

Of the wine and bathing I know not in what terms to speak, for language has no power to express the delightful sensations which these most grateful remedies conveyed to my exhausted frame. I was more refreshed by them, more revived, and more relieved, than words can possibly describe. To the bark and opium I was perhaps quite as much indebted, but their effects were less immediate, and less sensible. For many years Bacchus and I had been strangers. Now I was to take wine as a medical potion; and in

order to rank it high in this character, the commissary had kindly sent me some very choice old hock, which, in great truth, was both food and medicine. It was nectar and ambrosia—nay more, it ~~was~~ life and health to me! The peculiar and exquisite sensations I experienced, when the first glass of it wetted my parched lips, and cooled my burning stomach, will be remembered to my latest hour. They were heavenly! The nectareous drinks of the gods—unless the gods could drink them in “yellow” fever—were never so delicious!

The bathing was scarcely inferior to the wine, for at a moment when ineffable languor was rapidly sinking my weakened body to the grave, I was lifted out of my bed, into an empty bathing tub, and calabashes of cold sea water were dashed upon my naked person, with an effect which exceeds all description. Not only were the sensations of the moment inconceivably refreshing and delightful, but the more durable and important benefits were equally striking. Previous to bathing I fainted, only on my head being lifted up from the pillow; but after being taken out of the bathing tub, I was able, with

due support, to sit up for nearly ten minutes, while three persons, with rough cloths, rubbed me dry.

Although I was not delirious, I perceived a peculiar sense of confusion, or horror about me at various times during this day, and lapsed occasionally into a sort of stupor, approaching to coma, but it did not proceed to such a degree as to deprive me of consciousness; the powers of memory and volition were still at my command; and, when I was roused, it was remarked that my mental faculties were quite collected and unimpaired: and, as a proof that I was not insensible to what passed in the room, I may tell you that I felt, with full force, all the probability of the remark, and was too well aware how strongly appearances might justify it, when I heard some of the officers exclaim, as they turned away, after silently looking at me through my mosquito curtain, "*Ab poor doctor! we shall never see him again!*"

This had been my worst day—the feelings of the night I cannot attempt to describe. All was horror, horror, restless deadly horror! The sickened mind became unsettled as its

troubled mansion, and, like the body, was only sensible to wretchedness and horror!

The dawn of the next day seemed like an introduction to a new existence. The indescribable and distressing sensations, which had so cruelly afflicted me, were in some degree diminished, and the violence of the other symptoms slightly moderated:—an important change indeed! But, however happy, it was such as no man need be anxious to experience. Circumstanced as I then was, to me it had all the semblance of a change from death to life: but with such extreme misery and horror was it accompanied, that could these have continued many hours longer, life would have been bought at too dear a purchase, to have it regained at such a price. The mind was crowded with confused and incoherent ideas, painting the world as new, and altogether different from that I had so lately left; indeed so distorted and unnatural did every thing seem around me, that I felt a kind of hesitation whether to accept of my return to life, or proceed onward to the grave, which I saw wide open before me. This was the sixth day. The morning was dark and gloomy, and highly calculated to favor the

sombre impressions of my mind. It rained and blew; fierce lightning tore the heavens, and loud thunder, bursting from the clouds, ruptured the elements into unison with the confusion and disorder with which my feelings were pervaded. All nature seemed to partake of the unaccountable change, and to administer to the horrors which beset me. The whole order of things was inverted, and, for a time, I could not divest myself of the idea that the heavens were agitated with the convulsive throes of bringing forth a new world. One whole day, and a sad long night were thus dragged out in all the tumult and distress of regaining an existence, which only a day or two before, I had given up almost without a sigh.

After I had escaped from these distracting incoherences, I perceived the symptoms of the disease gradually declining, and, by persisting in the use of my remedies, I am become better reconciled to the world, and again recognise it as the same which I had so quietly resigned. I continued to drink most liberally of old hock, and took the bark in immoderate quantity, the extent and frequency of the dose being limited only by the power of the

stomach and bowels to retain it. The bathing was also repeated with inexpressible comfort to my languid and trembling frame. I also took copious draughts of bottled porter, which I found to be an exceedingly grateful and refreshing drink, as well as one of my most effectual remedies.

The thirst, and dryness of the mouth, lips, and teeth continued to annoy me until the eighth day. Great languor and prostration of strength were still present on the ninth; as were likewise, at intervals, the distressful sensations of horror and wretchedness. On the tenth, the return of strength was perceptible, although I had much dizziness of head, and faintness, and was afflicted with a troublesome deafness, which I am sorry to add is still the companion of my convalescence. Since the tenth day my recovery has been very rapid. The debility is not so great as might have been expected, and my appetite is strong and craving. Dainties in eating are not to be had, and fortunately I do not require them; for no turtle feast was ever enjoyed with greater relish than I now take, at noon, my plain English fare, of a crust

of bread, with a morsel of cheefe, and a deep draught of bottled porter.

Many apologies are due for troubling you with this tedious detail of *self*; for sadly tedious I fear you will find it, notwithstanding my having confined my pen, as much as possible, to a bare narration of the feelings I experienced, and the perils I have had to encounter, and concerning which I have fondly imagined that friendship would lead you to experience a lively interest. I should tell you that throughout the whole period of the disease I have not had any mark of that yellowness from which this fever has been erroneously named.

LETTER XIII.

*Hospitality and friendly attentions of the colonists towards the author. He makes a convalescent visit at "the Hope." Feels a threatening of relapse at the time of the spring tides. Mr. Blackader, the author's colleague, attacked with fever. Successful treatment of his case. Means early employed. * Short wet season. Author resumes the hospital duty at Mahaica. Decreased sickness at that station. Action of the Pelican sloop with the Medea French frigate. Faithful conduct of Mr. Kendall's and Mr. Green's slaves. Their inhumanity. Its probable cause. Theft committed by two slaves. Their obstinacy in denying it. Stratagem of an old slave in discovering it.*

Plantation Hope, Mahaica, Oct. 21.

HAD I not already endeavored to do justice to the universal hospitality which prevails in these colonies, I might enumerate, in proof of it, the many instances of friendly attention which I have experienced during the convalescence from my late attack of fever. Every table was at my command, every house my home, and every planter my friend. If it were not an injustice to particularize, I might mention to you the signal obligations I owe to captain MacRae, one of the gentlemen of the colony, now holding a company in the corps of South

American rangers, and to his brother, from whose house I have now the pleasure to address you. The captain made me daily visits, and watched me with all the care even of fraternal solicitude, during my sickness ; and as soon as he saw me able to be moved, he not only proposed that I should make his brother's house my convalescent home, but, without any trouble or concern on my own part, provided me the means of conveyance, and himself accompanied me hither ; where I have been received with the most cordial welcome, entertained with unaffected urbanity, and, I may say, nursed with sincere—nay, affectionate attention by his brother ; for not only have the best accommodations of the house been mine, but the friendship of this generous man has led him to procure all the restoratives of the neighbourhood for the re-establishment of my health, and the recovery of my lost strength.

Since my arrival, here, I have felt very strong symptoms of relapse, but, by the powerful aid of bark and Madeira wine, the threatened return of fever has been successfully resisted. I had been strongly cautioned by the gentlemen of the colony to “beware

of *the springs*”—implying that the disease would be likely to renew its attack at the full of the moon : I was, therefore, prepared to meet the first uneasy feelings with the appropriate remedies. On the fourteenth instant my head was in pain, my limbs ached, and I had general feelings of languor and restlessness about me ; when, recollecting the remark so often made to me, and which had been in some measure confirmed by my own observations in the hospital, I turned to the almanack and found that the moon was to be at the full on the sixteenth, therefore, without delay, I had recourse to the bark, and drank a two-fold portion of wine, but the symptoms continued to menace me with a renewal of fever until the eighteenth, after which they subsided, precisely as I had been assured would happen, with *the decline of the spring tides*.

I am extremely sorry to inform you that, since my last letter giving you an account of my own illness, Mr. Blackader, to whose unwearied attentions I was so essentially indebted during my confinement, has received a rude visit from our common enemy : at the same time it gives me sincere pleasure to add that he is recovered, and that the disease has been

slighter, and his sufferings less severe, than in my own case ; which I think we are justified in attributing to the attack being less insidious, and his having been twice blooded within the first twelve hours of the disease. We were both of opinion that if I had used venæsection earlier I should have suffered less, and it is probable that if I had not been blooded at all, I should not have held the pen to you now : we, therefore, employed our means with more boldness and promptitude, when Mr. Blackader was attacked, and thereby prevented the consuming action of the fever from producing the still more destructive symptoms of exhaustion. Others I am aware might tell you that the extreme languor and prostration of strength, which had so nearly sunk me to the grave, were *induced* by the bleeding—although I feel little doubt but they arose from the *neglect* of it, and were the effect of the exhausting symptoms which prevailed at the commencement of the disease, and which might have been moderated by earlier venæsection, and prevented from throwing the whole system into a state of debility, which at one time rendered my situation nearly as hopeless as it was alarming. After all, I lament that this is only matter of

opinion, however much experience may have confirmed it, in my mind, as an established fact.

It is now said to be the short dry season, but within the few last days we have had many heavy showers of rain, and more wet has fallen than is common in this month. Still the weather, and our muddy roads are greatly improved, and what is more important, we have far less of sickness. Since my removal from La Bourgade to Mr. MacRae's, I have resumed my attendance at the Mahaica hospital, and I have great satisfaction in being able to remark to you that the number of patients is not one-sixth so great, nor their diseases by any means so malignant, as when I was here before.

We have just heard of a severe action which has been fought off Guadalope, between the Pelican sloop of eighteen guns, captain Serle, and the Medea French frigate, and which adds another splendid trophy to our high-laurelled navy. The Pelican not only defeated the Medea, but took from her a prize-store-ship, which was under her protection, and it is believed she would have

captured the frigate also, had not two others come out of Guadalopec to her relief. These took back her prize, but the sloop escaped from them all; and it is said that Victor Hugues has released twelve of the Pelican's men, who were taken on board the store-ship, on account of their bravery, and their spirited conduct in fighting a vessel of such superior force.

Since my arrival at my friendly convalescent quarters, at the Hope, two circumstances have offered to my notice, which afford very striking examples of the character of slaves, and which you would not excuse me were I to omit noting. A French privateer, which, for some time past, had been lurking about the leeward coast of these colonies, had captured a considerable number of small prizes, and in particular several of the planters' boats, which had been in the habit of going down to Essequibo to fetch plantains, as provisions for the slaves. Among these, two boats lately fell into their hands, belonging to Mr. Kendall and Mr. Green, the latter of whom resides not far distant from the Hope; but on account of the privateer not having hands enough, on board, to man

all her prizes, the negroes of Mr. Kendall's boat were put on board the boat belonging to Mr. Green, and three or four sailors sent from the privateer to carry them into Trinidad. On the passage the Frenchmen talked much to the negroes about liberty, equality, and the rights of man, in all the common jargon of the revolution; holding out to them the high enjoyment of gaining their freedom; and assuring them that they would be carried from Trinidad to Guadalope, where they would be released from their slavery, become fellow-citizens, and remain in future *their own masters*. But these poor blacks, having been treated with great kindness and humanity by their owners, and not having been bred in the modern Gallic school, could not be made to comprehend the fascinating doctrine of equality, and therefore perversely rejected the proffered *French Liberty*; and instead of rejoicing, as it was supposed they would, to accept their freedom from the hands of these revolutionary republicans, they concerted a plan to rescue the boat, and take it back to their masters; in which attempt they met with complete success, but unhappily it was attended with that savage inhumanity which characterises the Africans.

A little before they came within sight of Trinidad they seized an opportunity of rising upon the Frenchmen, and, not satisfied with subduing them, they murdered every one of them, and threw their mangled bodies into the sea: then, like faithful slaves, put the boat about, and made the best of their way up the coast, returning, much pleased, to their owners, and to their task of slavery. The party consisted of five negroes belonging to Mr. Kendall, and three (two men and a boy) belonging to Mr. Green. On my asking them why they did not bring the Frenchmen on shore as prisoners, instead of killing them, their reply spake one of the unhappy truths of slavery, and proved that the lives of these unfortunate Frenchmen were sacrificed to an unjust law always operating against the negroes. “*Ab Massa,*” said they “*we ’fraid ’em tell lies upon us, and him people always believe Backra man sooner as Negro so we tink it best for kill ’em all.*”—These poor slaves were aware that against the evidence of a white man, whether it were true or false, they could not be heard; therefore, to prevent the possibility of any false reports of their prisoners operating to their prejudice, they deemed it wise to secure themselves the

privilege of giving their testimony in the cause of truth, by destroying those whose voices might have prevented it.

The other circumstance was likewise one in which the negroes were equally faithful to each other, and equally acted in concert ; but it was in a widely different cause. A gentleman coming in a boat from the town to his brother's house upon this coast, finding the tide slacken before he arrived, came on shore, and proceeded the remainder of the way by land, leaving his negroes to follow him in the boat ; in which he left a trunk containing his clothes, a brace of pistols, and a pocket-book with bills and notes to the amount of £2000. The negroes arrived safely with the succeeding tide, but brought the unfortunate intelligence, that the boat had been swamped in a heavy surf, and the trunk washed overboard and lost in the sea. This happened many weeks ago, and for some time after the reported accident the coast was very carefully searched, at each ebb of the tide, in the hope that the strong flowing of the water might have cast the trunk on shore, and that it might be found on the beach ; but it never appeared, and was at length given up as lost. A few

days ago, the owner of it happening to call in at a public auction, he there recognised a brace of pistols which were exposed for sale, as the identical pistols which had been lost in his trunk. From this circumstance it became manifest, that either the trunk must have been found, or it had never been lost: and suspicion falling upon the negroes, they were minutely examined as to the fact, but they most positively denied having any knowledge of the trunk or pistols, since the time when the boat was swamped. Still the inquiry, in some degree, countenanced the suspicion, and seemed to strengthen the probability that the things said to have been lost had been stolen by the negroes, under whose charge they had been left in the boat. The pistols were remarkable, and they exhibited no rust, nor any other appearance of injury; which must have been the case, in the event of their having been at the bottom of the sea. Persuasions, threats, and entreaties were equally unavailing: both the negroes solemnly protested that the trunk had been washed out of the boat into the ocean, and that they had never seen either that or the pistols since. On this, a very strict inquiry was made, proceeding step by step from the auctioneer, and the pistols were regularly

traced back to these very negroes, notwithstanding all their positive and unshaken assertions. They were accordingly examined again, and being told to whom they delivered them, and through whose hands they had passed in succession to the auctioneer, they were at last brought to confess that they had sold the pistols; but still they most obstinately insisted that they had found them, alone, upon the beach, some days after the boat was swamped, and denied all knowledge regarding the trunk, idly pretending that the pistols had fallen out in the sea, and been brought on shore with the tide: but this was too barefaced, and their conduct could no longer be tolerated:—when the pistols began to swim, it was time to speak in plain terms: 2000*l.* was a serious sum, and it was now evident that the trunk had never seen the depth of the ocean; the negroes were therefore told, that unless they would acknowledge what had become of it, they should be severely flogged, and the punishment repeated every morning, until they should confess the truth. But every threat was in vain! They were, consequently, led out to be punished: yet their master was humane, and always felt great reluctance in punishing his slaves; wherefore after

they were tied down, the lash was suspended, and a pardon promised them, if they would give the information required. But no ! The whip inspired no terrors, and they persevered in vowing their innocence respecting all but the pistols. The drivers were accordingly directed to let the whips fall ; and after giving them a few lashes, the punishment was again suspended, and the offer of forgiveness repeated, if they would tell what they had done with the pocket-book and the clothes ; but they were as perversely deaf to punishment, as to threats and entreaties, and denied the truth as obstinately as ever. Accordingly the stripes were repeated, and they were afterwards put into the stocks, in separate places of confinement, for the night. In the course of the same evening, from inquiries made among the negroes of an adjoining estate, some traces were discovered of the trunk, and one of the shirts which it had contained. This was accordingly told to each of the two negroes who had been punished ; but they *still persisted* in asserting their innocence. The following morning they were again led to the stake, but before their punishment was renewed, the offer was repeated to release and forgive them if they would confess ; yet they

still defied the whip, and submitted to be punished a second time without making any further discovery; and, indeed, from every part of their conduct it is highly probable that they would have suffered death, rather than have impeached each other, or betrayed the fact: but, fortunately, stratagem succeeded in attaining what force could never have effected.

An old and faithful negro named Peter, having conceived a plan to bring them to confession, came to his master to beg a bottle of rum, saying, "*If Massa gib Peter one bottle of rum, Peter tink he can find him trunk for Massa.*"

Great confidence had always been placed in this man, therefore, without asking many questions, the rum was given to him as he desired; and, true enough! the trusty Peter returned to his master, only a few hours after, with a full and correct history of the trunk and its contents.

The stratagem he had formed succeeded most completely, and Peter obtained from each of the negroes a detailed and similar ac-

count of the whole affair. He went first to Anthony, and under the show of sympathy compassionated his sufferings, and condemned the injustice of his punishment; then, with seeming kindness, and a parade of privacy, offered him some rum, and repeated it glass after glass, until the unsuspecting 'Tony was quite intoxicated.

Now was Peter's time to beat the charge; which he did by complaining of the other negro, Anthony's colleague, as a treacherous hypocrite, and rousing the indignation of 'Tony against him, by accusing him of having broken his faith, and told all about the trunk; adding that he had thus procured his own pardon and release, "*whilst only poor Tony left in 'em 'tocks to be flogged again to-morrow.*" 'Tony was struck with horror on hearing that his comrade had betrayed him, and in the heat of his abuse, and execration, divulged to the subtle Peter the whole secret—who then attempted to calm him, by saying, that as he also now told the truth, he would apply to his master, begging him to release "*'Tony as well as t'other.*" Having by this finesse obtained the whole history from Anthony, Peter next went to the place where the other

negro was confined, taking with him the remainder of the rum, and proceeding in the same manner, rebuked him for not telling the truth, and obtaining his pardon and release as 'Tony had done, saying—" *Why you no tell too! den Massa no flog you again, but forgive you, and let you free like 'Tony.*" This poor man being heated with rum, was deceived like the other, and expressed himself shocked at the base cowardice of his comrade in having betrayed their secret, in order to avoid further punishment. The wily old Peter still provoking his anger towards 'Tony, led him on to disclose all the facts, which, corresponding with the details of the other, confirmed their correctness, and left not a doubt but the statement of each was founded in truth.

Having thus far succeeded, Peter came to his master with the empty bottle, and relating the whole of his proceedings, in obtaining the information, told him how the trunk and its contents had been disposed of, and where several of the things might still be found.

It proved, that instead of the trunk being washed overboard, the two negroes, who

had been left to bring on the boat, had stolen it, and had disposed of its contents, by selling some, and depositing others with the slaves of the adjoining plantations; upon whom several of the articles of wearing apparel were found the next morning, when Anthony and his comrade, still manacled, were led by Peter to the spot, in order that they might point out to him where they were concealed.

Not knowing the value of the bills and notes, nor how to negotiate them, the contents of the pocket-book met the same fate, as the unfortunate Frenchmen on board of Mr. Green's boat, and upon the same principle:—they were destroyed, and thrown into the sea, lest, as the negroes expressed it, they should *tell lies upon them!* for their ignorant prejudices represent letters, and other writings, in the same dangerous character as the tongues of white men! Although the bills and notes were irrecoverably lost, still it afforded considerable satisfaction, to know that they had not fallen into the hands of any one who might bring them to an illicit market; for, that there were persons in the colony unprincipled enough to have received them, upon

very easy terms, from the negroes, was but too manifest, from the fact of the pistols, which had not gone from Anthony, or his comrade, or *any of their colour*, in a direct line to the auctioneer !

LETTER XIV.

News from England implies a wide spreading war, and a transformation of the coalition against France. Spanish war a joyous occurrence to English sailors. Strange pretence urged by the Spanish government. Interesting situation of the English upon the coast of South America. Arrival of medical officers at Demarara. Author receives instructions to continue in Guiana. Regret on account of his letters being forwarded to St. Domingo. Mr. Blackader and the author again well. Mr. Jordan attacked with fever. Relapses of fever at the time of the spring tides. Contemplations on the subject of England, after escaping from the yellow fever. Sick reports from the Islands. Physicians destroyed. Death of Col. Gammell. The happy prospect of returning to England unprosperous to the officers of the 93d. regiment. Prediction of Col. Gammell on leaving Demarara. Effect of the dry season—with respect to the sick—with respect to the roads. Temperature of climate. Range of the thermometer. A deputy purveyor and hospital mates arrive at Demarara. Sir Ralph Abercromby returns to England. General Graham left in command. Rumour of an expected attack from Surinam. A West India bed. A female negro-driver. Trifles sometimes become matters of importance. Custom respecting beef—respecting funerals. Mistake of an English lady.

La Bourgade, Nov. 17.

FOR some time past we have been anxiously looking for news from England. Papers are at length arrived, and we read, that instead of

drawing nigh to a peace, we are only now entering upon a wide-spreading war. The great coalition against France appears to be falling away—or rather to be veering round, and to point against the defenders, instead of the disturbers of mankind ! Our sailors will not lament that the Spaniards have thrown away the scabbard, and joined the list of their enemies ; for, with them, they always expect to exchange cannon-ball, for the more fulminating ore of the Mexican mines.

Amongst the slimy pretences urged by Spain for this act of folly, and self-degradation, we read that the capture of these colonies is wrought up into a mighty offence. Poor slaves of the *great nation*, they must plead something, however absurd ! They are told to do it : and in their shameless imbecility, it only remains to them to obey !

By inspecting the map you will find that our situation upon this coast is now rendered peculiarly interesting, having enemies on each side, the wild Indians and deep woods behind, and the foaming ocean before us. The Spaniards are on our left, and to leeward ; the Dutch and French to windward on our

right;—close in our rear are heavy and impenetrable forests, inhabited by wild and naked tribes; and our whole front is bounded by the open sea. Our new foes will have more cause of alarm from us, than we can possibly have from them :—being to leeward of us, we shall be able to run down, at any time, and surprize them at Trinidad, or the Caraccas : whereas it might cost them a voyage of many days to make their passage, against the trade winds, far enough to annoy us with any effect : further, the superiority of our fleet gives us so entirely the command of the coast, that the Spanish vessels may be expected to afford a plentiful harvest to our sloop and privateers.

An express announcing the arrival of a reinforcement of medical officers from Martinique called me, somewhat suddenly, from my hospitable convalescent quarters, at Mahaica. On hearing that these gentlemen were come, the suggestion naturally occurred, that it was a detachment from the hospital staff of the Charibbee islands, sent to relieve the division of the St. Domingo staff, and to set us at liberty to proceed to our original destination : but so far from this being the case, the rein-

forcement consists only of a garrison surgeon and mate ; and instead of orders being sent to us to set off for St. Domingo, I have received copies of hospital papers, and instructions for my guidance, in directing the duties of the medical department of these colonies.

Thus it would seem that some determination has been taken at head quarters, regarding us ; and that in future we are to be attached to the hospital staff of the Charibbee islands.

In this I know of no greater regret I shall experience, than that of being prevented from meeting the kind remembrances of my friends, which I had anxiously looked to, as accumulating for me at St. Domingo, during many months past. At the same time I grieve to know, that another period, equally long, may yet be consumed before I can hear from you, notwithstanding that present appearances seem to fix Guiana as my permanent home.

I now feel it a severe mortification, that I should have so long arranged for my letters to be sent to St. Domingo, but I hope to be more fortunate in saying write to me at *Demarara*.

Of myself I need not speak, for my strength is so rapidly returning that I scarcely belong either to the list of sick or convalescents. My comrade, Mr. Blackader, is also growing strong, and forgetting his invalid feelings, but Mr. Jordan, one of my assistants, has suffered a late attack, from which, after much danger, he is only slowly recovering. Having before mentioned to you the circumstance of the relapses of fever, corresponding remarkably with the periods of the moon, I may now tell you, that the fact was particularly noticed in the case of this gentleman. He suffered a relapse during his early convalescence, and it was remarked that, on the same day, four of the patients in the hospital had a renewed attack of the fever. This coincidence led us to look at the almanack, when it was found to be the day previous to the change of the moon.

Mr. Blackader with our recovering assistant and myself, all in different stages of convalescence, having met together a few evenings ago, it happened that the conversation turned from yellow fever, and other ills, to the many comforts of our dear England; and if you could know how gratefully our whole minds were absorbed on this inexhausti-

ble subject, and the high delight which the conversation led us to contemplate, in returning to the tranquil enjoyments of that happy and salubrious home, you might almost envy us a long absence, and the danger of never seeing our native island again !

The reports from Martinique, Grenada, and St. Lucie, respecting the ravages of disease, I am sorry to find, are not more favorable than our own. The great scourge of the climate has made sad havoc in these islands, and the medical officers, we are told, have suffered in full proportion. Of the physicians who were attached to the windward expedition, four have already fallen victims to disease—viz. Doctors Riollay, Story, Clifton, and Suttleworth. With sincere grief I likewise hear of the death of poor Colonel Gammell, who so lately left us in the fullness of health. In his loss the service has to lament a most valuable officer. The removal of this gentleman and his comrades of the 93d regiment from these colonies, instead of being accompanied with all the comfort which attached to the prospect of returning to England, seems to have been but the signal of unhappy events. While they remained together at Berbische,

and under Colonel Gammell's excellent rules of command, the whole of the officers were singularly healthy, but the suspension of the regular system he had maintained, and a total relaxation from duty, together with the hurry of embarkation, and perhaps the liberal glass at parting from other comrades, while they have unfortunately removed the happy exemption from disease, which those gentlemen had enjoyed, have also proved the high utility of a rigid and correct discipline in these destructive regions.

One of the officers of the 93d died at Demarara, whither he had arrived from Berbische, preparatory to going on board the ship in which he was to have proceeded to England : now, we hear of the death of Colonel Gammell at Martinique : and a third officer, of the same regiment, was prevented from embarking with his comrades by an attack of fever, which had nearly deprived him of life, and which still detains him among us. The Colonel left Demarara at the time I was lying dangerously ill, and was one of the friends who on turning from my bed-side, shook his head and despaired of ever seeing me again. Alas ! I grieve to find him so correct in the

fact, although his apprehensions did not go to the event precisely as it occurred—for little did he expect that it would be my lot to live, and thus soon deplore his death !

At the La Bourgade hospital, as well as at Mahaica, we feel the effect of the present dry season, the numbers on our sick-list being considerably less than for several months past, yet the dread remains of expiring disease have lately afforded us too frequent opportunities of prosecuting the comparative examinations I before mentioned to you, and we have availed ourselves of them to a considerable extent. Among the advantages arising from the dry weather with which these colonies have lately been blessed, no one is more conspicuous than the improvement which it has effected in our deep and muddy roads. Hitherto they have been intolerably bad, and indeed, on account of the depth of wet and stiff clay, almost impassable. At present they are dry, and from being upon a perfect level, and the clay being hardened and worn smooth, they are as fine roads for travelling as the very best that you have in England.

Since the weather has been settled, we

find the thermometer rise occasionally at noon as high as 86 or 87—usually it has been from 82 to 85. This climate is perhaps one of the most steady in the world, the range of the thermometer, upon the cultivated part of the coast, being only from 11 to 15 degrees. Most commonly the mercury is at 73 at six o'clock in the morning—and at noon 84. The lowest I have seen it, at any time, was 72—and the highest 87. From living in constant heat and relaxation our bodies become highly sensible to cold, and I sometimes feel my fingers chilly, as in an autumn morning in England, although the thermometer stands as high as 74.

Since the arrival of the garrison surgeon and assistant, our department has been further strengthened with the addition of a deputy purveyor, and some hospital mates. These gentlemen are come in good time to enjoy the evening shade of our toils. We have supported the severe labour and fatigue of the sickly season without them, and they now find us well seasoned in our duty, and with our hospitals far less crowded. When we most wanted them, their services were most required in the islands, and now we have less

occasion for them, they can best be spared. However I am busily engaged in making up the returns, and all the necessary accounts and hospital papers, from the time of our arrival in these colonies, and shall hope soon to be relieved from one branch of my late duty, by resigning to our newly arrived deputy purveyor the business of his department.

The gentlemen who have joined us bring much news of the islands, and of the army, but we do not learn that any attack is at present meditated upon Guadaloupe. Indeed the army seems to have lapsed into a state of repose, and probably no active operations will be resumed, until the return of the commander in chief from England; whither he is gone, it is supposed, to concert measures for pursuing the object of the expedition: and, perhaps, with the new campaign, new projects may be formed, and new enterprizes undertaken. During the absence of Sir Ralph Abercromby, General Graham is left in command.

Rumour has lately threatened us with an attack from Surinam, but we feel no alarm on this subject; having an adequate force to

meet the enemy at sea, and troops enough, on shore, to resist any detachment which the Dutch might be able to send from that colony.

I fear you will find this letter to consist of a strange and tedious melange, but as you desire to hear of all that strikes me as uncommon or peculiar, I ought not to omit mentioning to you the form of a bed, which I saw lately at the house of one of the richest planters in the colony. Its construction was novel, but extremely well contrived for the climate. The bed was of ample width, and from being covered with a hard mattress, might have seemed well calculated for avoiding the inconvenience of excessive heat ; but West Indian luxury had gone further, and formed the bedstead into two different stages, the one about eight inches higher than the other, so as, while lying under the same covering, completely to separate the mulatto nymph from her lord. What would the fairer dames of Europe say to such a contrivance, calculated to drive them away, at pleasure, to the lower stage of a husband's bed ?

On my way down the coast from Ma-

haica, I also observed among the slaves, what to me was a novelty ; although I was told, by a gentleman of the colony, that it was by no means uncommon. In one of the fields we passed a gang of negroes employed at their labour, with a female driver carrying the whip at their backs. On my remarking that it was not a becoming duty for the *beau sexe*—that the nature of the lady might be too tender to admit of her correcting the strong—and her arm too feeble to enable her to chastise the idle, my companion replied, that I was much mistaken, for that on the contrary the “ *women drivers*,” were sometimes peculiarly severe, and often corrected the stoutest slaves with no feeble arm.

The following anecdote forces upon my mind a fact which is perhaps universally observed, viz. that, where the population is thin, the society confined to a few, and the intercourse with other places bounded by narrow limits, trifles gain importance, and occurrences which, in themselves, are insignificant, become subjects of conversation, and, in some degree, of interest. Hence the idle tattle of the tea table, and the unmeaning gossip of a country village ; and hence, I fear, you will

say, many of the useless remarks from the thinly inhabited coast of Guiana; for I often feel that I note to you circumstances, which, in themselves, are very uninteresting; yet if they make up any thing towards the habits of the people, or the character of the country where I am placed, fancy tells me, that you would not excuse me were I to omit them. Indeed it only remains to me to mark such events and circumstances as pass immediately before me, for the pressing duties of my station leave me neither time nor opportunity to engage in the researches of more remote utility. Accept then the anecdote alluded to, and place it to the account of the habits and customs of the people of Demarara:—at the expence of a lady from Barbadoes, it has afforded amusement to the whole town of Stabroek.

From the great heat of climate, and the consequent rapidity with which dead animal matter tends to resume its gaseous form, it is become a custom, here, for the butcher, when he is about to kill beef, to secure the sale of the whole carcase, before he slaughters the animal: for which purpose he sends round a ticket or notice informing the inhabitants when the beef is to be killed, in order that

each person may put down what part, and what quantity he may wish to have.—It is likewise a custom among the Dutch people to send round a notice when any person dies, inviting the neighbours to the funeral, and this paper is commonly superscribed in conspicuous characters “*doed brief.*” A Dutch officer having died, the burial ticket was sent round in due form, when a lady, who had lately arrived from Barbadoes, reading the words “doed brief” put down her name for “twelve pounds and a half of the buttock.” The messenger proceeding throughout the town with the notice, the mistake was quickly known in every house, and the gloomy solemnity of the occasion was interrupted by the various witticisms, upon the English lady bespeaking twelve pounds and a half of the Dutchman’s buttock.

LETTER XV.

Author receives letters from England. Happy feelings on the occasion. Commencement of the short wet season. A vessel arrives—late from St. Domingo. Unhappy report of sickness from that island. Further instances in proof of the coincidence of fever, and the lunar periods. Remarks upon the degenerate sentiments and practices too often displayed in the army. Integrity a noxious weed. Counsel of an individual to his comrade respecting conscience. Newspapers arrive to the date of Oct. 22d. Hopes of peace from Lord Malmbury's mission to Paris.

Demarara, Nov. 30.

How shall I tell you the high delight of this happy week! Need I say more, than that three letters have reached me from England, being the first that I have received since leaving my home and my friends! A small packet was sent to my quarters by the commandant, having come with his letters from Martinique; and it would require a long absence from those you esteem to enable you to judge of the transport I felt, when on fixing my eye upon the superscription, I unexpectedly discovered that they were letters from England. They had been put into the army-bag at the

war office, and being addressed to the head quarters of the "army in the West Indies," were fortunately sent to Martinique instead of St. Domingo, and from thence forwarded hither. Riches and luxury may boast their appalling pleasures, but they offer no enjoyment so exquisite—they move not the heart with such tender and genial delight, as I experienced on this glad occasion. One of the letters was of December, the two others of July and August last. I need not tell you that I read them over and over, until I could repeat them all verbatim : but not satisfied with this, I took them to my bed-side, and perused them again, after I had laid me down to rest, in order to strengthen the grateful association impressed upon my mind, and to protect it against the oblivious encroachments of Morpheus. It were impossible to describe to you how sweet was the repose, or how delighting the dreams of this most happy night ! Suffice it to know that I was in London, and amidst ye all, until morning ! Not a word had I heard from any friend for nearly twelve long months before, and, in the interval, the fates had more than once nearly separated me from them for ever. Now I learned that they were still mindful of me ; nor did any

fombre shades cloud the intelligence they communicated : all were well and happy, and the joyous tidings came to me unalloyed.

I have again to announce to you a change of season in these western regions. During the latter part of this month, we have had frequent returns of rain, and the weather is by no means so clear and fine as it was in October, and the beginning of November : but we are told that the short wet season is setting in, which will continue five or six weeks ; and that we are afterwards to expect a long dry season of three or four months.

I before remarked to you, that in consequence of St. Domingo being so far to leeward, we very seldom receive any news from thence, except by way of England ; but a vessel is now arrived at Demarara, which was some weeks ago at St. Domingo, and I am sorry to observe that the captain brings a very afflicting report of the sickness which prevails in that colony ; such, alas ! as renders all that we have suffered, here, comparatively trivial.

It has again occurred to us to witness a striking coincidence of both the attack and

relapse of fever, with the period of the spring tides. Yesterday four of the convalescents in the hospital relapsed into ague, and to-day five new patients were admitted with the same disease, all of whom were likewise attacked yesterday, only a few hours before the change of moon.

I can scarcely acquit myself for committing what I know will be a trespass upon your feelings; yet I cannot avoid remarking that an immense field has lately opened to my contemplation—that a huge and frightful volume has been laid before me upon the important subject of army œconomy, and that I grieve to discover how much the high sentiments of honor, which ought to attach to every military employment, are sacrificed to personal interest, and suffered to degenerate into a mere traffic for pecuniary gain. It is lamentable to see how grossly the sacred laws of morality are outraged; and to know in what various instances the confidence reposed in the servants of the public is abused. To such an extent is it carried, in some instances, that a man of integrity and correct principles is regarded as a troublesome exotic; and if he does not kindly take root in the corrupt

foil in which he is planted, he is shunned as an offensive weed, which, but from the danger of pricking their fingers, many would desire to pluck up, and cast from among them.

What think you of a person holding a commission in his Majesty's service gravely recommending to another officer "to lock up his conscience in a strong box before he comes out with the army again, and resume it on his return." This *modest* gentleman might with great propriety have been asked, whether *he* had stipulated to forsake his *present habits*, and renew his acquaintance, if he ever had any, with that troublesome thing called conscience on *his* return. But without being treated quite as severely as he merited, the reply to his *friendly* advice, was such as to diffuse a blush, where, I much suspect, none had been seated for a long time before; and, although there may be little hope of his changing either his principles or his conduct, I apprehend that, in future, he will be more cautious in avowing his *very honorable* sentiments. Would it could be remarked that the opinions and practices of this man were singular: but, alas! there are too many proofs that they are far, *very far* from being uncommon; al-

though but few may be hardy enough to declare them.

You will know that we are enjoying one of the highest gratifications, which can be offered to us, during our absence from England, when I tell you that a packet of newspapers is just arrived up to as late a date as October 22d. We read in them with peculiar pleasure, that notwithstanding our recent quarrel with Spain, some hopes are entertained of a speedy pacification between the contending powers. Indeed we find it rumoured that Lord Malmfbury is gone to Paris to negotiate the terms. Tell me it is true. Say that the wasteful current of blood is about to stop—that we are soon to be recalled to our friends, and that we may find our happy England seated in the lap of peace, dispensing the mild blessings of industry and tranquillity.

LETTER. XVI.

South American Rangers go into Barracks near the hospital. Scene of drilling the negroes. Rough treatment used towards them, by non-commissioned officers of their own colour. Indians diverted with seeing the black "awkward squad." British soldiers confined in the guard room of the blacks. Respecting the policy of employing the negroes in arms. Neglect of religious observance. Attempt to remedy it. Author apprehensive lest his friend should grow wearied with the subject of disease. Dutch and negro soldiers admitted into the British hospital. The symptoms of yellow fever change with the changes of season. Coma the more prominent feature. An account of the fever published by Pere Labat. Difficult recovery from surgical maladies confined to Europeans. Uncommon case of recovery in a negro. Mr. Blackader leaves Guiana. An intended publication. Journal of a common soldier. Custom respecting coloured offspring. Women of colour do not aspire to the dignity of becoming wives to the whites. Author procures a horse. Concerning the weather during the wet season.

La Bourgade, Dec. 20.

WITH a becoming attention to the health and well-being of our new corps of Rangers, it has been deemed expedient to remove them from their encampment, and place them in barracks, in order to protect them from the

rains of the short wet season which now prevails : but unluckily for the peace and quiet of our neighbourhood, a large building has been fitted up for their accommodation, close to the quarters of the medical officers, and we have all the noise, hurry, and confusion of the whole regiment constantly before us. The scene amidst which we are placed, by this arrangement, exceeds all conception, for it is of all degrees, and all varieties : but whether gay or serious, trivial or important, sombre or ludicrous, it is always noisy and turbulent. The activity and exertion which are required, to bring such recruits into habits of method and order, are almost beyond belief. Where the whole, from being bred up in ignorance and constant toil, are very much upon a parallel with oxen taken from the plough, you will imagine what the most stupid of them must be, who form that select body termed the "awkward squad." Upon beholding them when they first assemble, it might seem nearly as practicable to train a party of mules to carry arms. Tenfold the patience of the all-submissive patriarch must be necessary to teach them the air and carriage of foldiers, and to bring them into any thing like military discipline.

The colonel, zealous for their improvement, and desirous to make soldiers of them as speedily as possible, is indefatigable in his attentions towards them ; and their drills are so frequent as to keep them in almost perpetual motion. The ridiculous mistakes they commit—their egregious blunders—uncouth gestures, and the extreme awkwardness of their movements, might be sometimes diverting, were it not that our feelings are pained by the very rough treatment exhibited towards them, by the despotic serjeants and corporals of their own colour.

Frequently the “awkward squad” is led out to drill, with a proportion of non-commissioned officers nearly equal in number to the privates, each giving the word of command in the most authoritative manner, holding a short pipe in his mouth, scarcely extending to the point of his nose ; and each busily marching his party to the right and left, backwards and forwards, and in every variety of direction, pushing, pulling, and cuffing them about, as if they were machines, totally devoid of sensibility. Often when stepping forward to the words “left, right, left, right,” a stout black serjeant suddenly seizes the leg of some one

who does not put it forth to his mind, and jerks it on with a force that endangers the dislocation of his hip ; when the poor fellow, forgetting that his body must maintain the military square, whatever becomes of his limbs, looks down to see that he steps out better next time ; but another serjeant instantly lodges his coarse fist under his chin, and throws back his head with such violence as almost to break his neck. Again fixed erect, he unfortunately looks to the left, instead of the right, when his angry commander grasping with both hands, twists round his neck, with a force nearly sufficient to wring off his head. Still some unfortunate member forgets itself, and strays out of place : an arm perhaps falls an inch before the line in which it should hang ; when one of the attending serjeants, or corporals, forces it back with a thrust that might put out the shoulder. Next a knee is off its guard, and, bending itself into ease, meets with a severe rap from a huge grenadier with a shingle, or any other rough weapon which happens to be in his hand. Then, by some mistake, the right leg advances instead of the left, or the left instead of the right, the remedy for which is a hard kick, or a rough blow upon the shin. Perhaps when

resting under the word "*attention*" the heels are placed at an angle a little more acute than is desired, upon which a broken board, or some other rough piece of wood is thrust between the naked ancles, to wrench them afunder; and not unfrequently, at the expence of a painful excoriation: thus the poor black is beset on all quarters and at all points, and, whether standing or moving, feels the weight of the cane, the fist, or some other weapon, upon either his head or his shoulders, his back, knees, shins, or naked toes.

Even the Indians, whose gravity seldom allows a smile to escape, have been diverted at the drilling of the black "*awkward squad*." A party, from the woods, came in one day at the gate, at the time the regiment was under arms, and, forgetting their usual reserve, expressed symptoms of amazement on seeing a body of negroes drawn up in a line, with firelocks in their hands, and clothed in uniform; but their attention was soon diverted from the great body of the battalion, by observing the *awkward squad*, whose blundering evolutions seemed to afford them more amusement than any other occurrence we had witnessed. Indeed it was the first time we had

been able to mark the expression of surprise or curiosity upon the Indian countenance. The bucks pointed with their arrows to the unseemly group making remarks to the buckeen, who, like the men, were so roused from their indifference as to smile, and seem much diverted.

The lessons and conversations, comprehending scolding, encouraging, reasoning, and commanding, used by the sergeants and corporals to the heavy drones with whose improvement they are charged, are sometimes highly amusing, and often not without considerable interest, from tending to develop their characters, and the state of their uncultivated faculties.

It happened lately that two of the British soldiers who were employed at the hospital, having been guilty of irregular conduct, were ordered into confinement; and, from it being near, they were taken to the guard-room of the rangers, where, upon recovering their sober senses, they felt extremely shocked at their degraded situation in being prisoners under the bayonet of negroes, whom they had perhaps cuffed about as slaves, or mere

beasts of burden, and were quite indignant on recollecting that the very men who were now put over them, even since their arrival in the colony, had toiled all day in the field, goaded as horses or oxen. The reflection may perhaps serve as an useful lesson to them, and teach them to avoid similar disgrace in future ; but I wish no unpleasant jealousies may arise among the different corps of soldiery. Possibly a strict discipline, and the good conduct of the officers, may divert any invidious feelings that may be excited into a generous and laudable spirit of emulation, and make the varieties of colour and country subservient to useful and honorable purposes : but it will require no inconsiderable address to preserve a perfect harmony among blacks and whites, Dutch, English, and Africans: Still the discordance alluded to is not all that is to be apprehended from training the slaves to arms. It is a measure which unquestionably provides a strong defence for the present exigency—but it admits of a question whether it may not be employing a temporary convenience to establish what may be found a future evil. May it not teach the slaves a fact which will not readily be forgotten : may they not learn that they are not only

the most numerous, but, also, the strongest party : in short—may it not instruct them that they are men—and that a single step might ensure to them the rights of their common nature ! Compared to slavery the restrictions of military discipline are as exquisite freedom ; and the negro who has once tasted it cannot be expected to return quietly to the yoke, and again expose his back to the whip.

Should the slaves once feel sensible of their power, the effect of this assurance will not be retarded by any religious or moral consideration. Indeed, as my pen is led to this remark, it may not be inappropriate to follow it by a word upon the total neglect of religious observance, which prevails in these colonies. Knowing that the established religion of the Dutch is Calvinism, you will be much surprized to learn that all the ceremonies of the Sabbath have been utterly disregarded. No church nor temple is to be found in the settlements, nor have the inhabitants even availed themselves of the facilities of their religious rites so far as to appoint any house, or other building, for the performance of divine service. Neglecting their own duties to

the Deity, they have used no means to inculcate a sense of religious awe, or of moral conviction, among the slaves, but have confided the government of these poor degraded beings solely to terror, and the whip. Sunday, it is true, has been set apart as a day of rest, but no solemn ceremony marks it as the Sabbath. Idleness and merriment only distinguish it from the other six days of the week. It is a holyday to the negroes, but no part of it is devoted to their moral or religious improvement: not one hour is appropriated to instruct them, in the duties we all owe to the Creator; or to teach them the principles which ought to govern the conduct of man towards man.

Since our arrival a laudable attempt has been made to remedy this unchristian-like neglect, but such is the force of habit that, hitherto, the prospect of success cannot be considered as very auspicious. A place has been appointed for the performance of the duties of the Sabbath, and after due notice being given of the time and place, the military chaplain attended to perform the service: the governor likewise made his appearance; but after waiting for a considerable time, and finding that no further congregation assem-

bled, the governor and chaplain adjourned, and walked quietly home, postponing both prayers and sermon to a future occasion.

I feel myself suspended between the fear of omitting ought which you would regret, and the apprehension of becoming wearisome to you upon an unpleasant subject. Yet as the disease of this climate is matter of general anxiety, at the present moment, and creates peculiar interest, not only in our own island, but throughout the continents of Europe and America, I cannot reconcile to myself to pass it over without noting to you, from time to time, the more prominent circumstances which present themselves to our observation regarding it.

The diminution of sickness affording us sufficient room for their accommodation, the sick soldiers of the Dutch corps in our service, and those also of the South American Rangers are now received as patients into the hospital, together with our own troops. This arrangement will afford us an opportunity of witnessing more precisely the effect of disease, not simply upon the subjects of different countries, but upon those who are recently arrived

from a colder climate; those who from the residence of a few years are become in a certain degree acclimatés; and those to whom the seasons of this latitude are altogether congenial.

With each change of season our desperate foe seems to fight under a new face, and camelion-like, to assume a new skin. Very seldom do we now see the fever attended with that remarkable yellowness which it so commonly exhibited in the months of August and September. During the late dry season it lost its continued, and took on a remitting or intermitting form, and the intermitting type still continues to be very frequent; but among the recent cases, we have more now that are rapidly fatal than we had in the finer season of October and the beginning of November: yet even these but rarely exhibit that yellowness of surface, which, although improperly, has been held so peculiarly characteristic as even to give a name to this destructive hydra.

Many of the sick now fall into a state of coma, and without exhibiting any other striking mark of illness—without uttering a complaint or a groan, sink very rapidly into the

arms of death. The countenance becomes pale; the skin assumes a clay or lead coloured hue; a stupor supervenes; the patient lies in a state of tranquil insensibility; and without yellowness, or the other common marks of the fever, in the course of a few days he sleeps to wake no more! Sometimes, only a few hours complete the course of the disease, as in a late instance, where almost the only symptom was a profound coma, and the soldier died within the short space of twelve hours. Were this a solitary case I am aware how soon scepticism would convert it into a different disease; but without disputing for a name, I need only remark that it is far from a rare instance, for, alas! we have too many examples in proof of it being a very common mode in which the fever now makes its attack. In others of the cases which prove fatal, we find hiccough the predominant, and most distressing symptom: it continues in opposition to every remedy, and, in a few days, the patient is exhausted and dies!

Neither public nor extensive libraries were to be expected in these colonies; but had I much time for reading, I might sadly lament this deficiency. After examining with

much care and attention all the late authors that I could collect, I think myself fortunate in meeting with the old and voluminous publication of Pere Labat, a Jesuit, who, so long since as in the year 1701, wrote a tour through the West India islands, in which he describes very correctly the epidemic fever of these regions, and gives an accurate account of his own sufferings under an attack of the disease; in the treatment of which he was twice blooded, venæsection being at that time used as a sovereign remedy.

Amidst our changes of season, I should be highly gratified could I report favorably of the improvement in our surgical wards; but of wounds and ulcers I have still only gloomy tidings to offer: and it is remarkable that the distress occasioned by these is wholly confined to the Europeans; for while the soldiers from England continue to suffer dreadfully from their sores, the wounds of the Africans, who are lying in the adjoining beds of the same wards, heal with surprizing rapidity, and are completely cured. Indeed the recovery from sores and ulcers in this climate is as peculiarly successful among the blacks, as it is the reverse among the Europeans, the

examples in proof of which are abundant : but not to tire you with tedious histories of cases I need only mention one, which has been recently related to me by a most respectable medical practitioner now in Demarara* ; and by whom the treatment of the case was conducted. A negro, being detected in the act of robbing a plantain walk, was taken into confinement by the watchman, who, in the struggle to secure him, wounded him very desperately upon the head, neck, and shoulders with a cutlass : which, at one of the blows, passed through the bones of the scull and the membranes, into the substance of the brain. In the course of the cure, it happened that the dressings one day fell from this part, and, the flies gaining access to the sore, maggots were bred in great numbers within the brain. These were removed by the professional attendant, who in picking them out was employed for a considerable time at each of three successive dressings : still the negro rapidly recovered, and is now alive and well.

In consequence of a garrison surgeon having joined us, and the late severe duties of the hospital being lessened, I am deprived of

Dr. Monro.

the society of my friendly comrade, the surgeon of the 99th regiment, whose zeal and services have been so conspicuous in the hospital department, from the time of our arrival in these settlements. The loss of this gentleman is a great privation to me, and I should feel it matter of high regret, were it not that I see better prospects to himself in his absence, than in his remaining here. He is gone to head quarters at Martinique, in the hope of obtaining a staff appointment; or, in failure of that, to follow his regiment to England: but, as well on the ground of abilities and length of service, as from his zeal and attention on duty, he has a claim to promotion, and seeing that our amiable commander in chief is always quick to discern merit, and never slow to reward it, I feel assured that the expectations of so deserving an officer will not be disappointed.

I have lately been much diverted with hearing the full detail of an intended publication, for which the author assures me he is busily collecting materials. It is to be entitled the "History of Guiana," and to be written by a person who has neither the advantage of education, nor of talents. You

will judge of the merits of the work, when you learn that it is in the author's plan to describe *minutely* the sources, and the junction of the rivers Oronoko and Amazons, without having travelled twenty miles from the sea coast; and to give a full and *accurate* account of different races of people, not one of whom he has ever seen.

The diversion afforded by the ludicrous account of this intended publication has been followed by superior gratification in the perusal of the simple journal of a private soldier, who lately died in the hospital. His notes and remarks though not highly edifying, are such as might excite much interest in the bosom of reflection, for they exhibit a striking example of the contemplations of a military man, and of the state of the human mind among the lower orders of the soldiery; and are calculated to show in a forcible manner how nearly happiness is allied to contentment, and with how much facility the leading comforts of life may be secured, when our wants are bounded with discretion.

A fact has recently occurred to my knowledge, displaying a custom which I am sure

you will regard with astonishment.—It is usual, in these colonies, for a person to take a negro, or more frequently a mulatto, or *meftee* woman as house-keeper and companion of his bed-chamber ; and, if he has children by her, and cannot afford, or does not chuse to be at the expence of sending them to Europe to be educated, he derives no dishonor from breeding up the sons as mechanics, and giving out the daughters in keeping to his friends ; and so commonly is this custom established, that no feelings of remorse seem to attach to it : on the contrary, it is deemed the best provision the parent can make for his daughter, to place her with a respectable man as his *bonne amie* : but it is necessary to understand that these are never whites, nor children born in wedlock—they are daughters of women of colour, who, like themselves, have felt honored in being chosen the companions of their lords ; and who do not aspire to the dignified character of wife. Neither father nor daughter feel any sense of shame, in yielding to this general usage of the country—*her* ambition soars no higher, for she is bred up with no other expectation—and the indelible disgrace which would attach to marrying a woman of colour leaves

the parent no hope of providing for his daughter, by placing her in the more honorable state of wedlock. Still the practice is so utterly repugnant to European sentiments, that it must require a long residence in this country to reconcile it to the feelings of the father; for, whatever may be the distinction between wife and mistress, it cannot be supposed that the feelings of nature in the breast of the parent can be thereby diminished. The child is equally his offspring, and, from being less protected by the laws, is even in a greater degree the object of his care: it must therefore cost him many a pang to submit to this insecure and perilous disposal of his daughter. If the protector dies or leaves the country, the protégée returns to her father, until another suitor offers her his home.

You will be surprized to know that, until very lately, I have not had an opportunity of purchasing a horse, but you would be much more surprized could you see what a miserable animal I have, at length, procured for the sum of nearly forty guineas. Horses are very scarce, and of high value upon this coast. No more are kept than are required for absolute use, and a spare one is rarely to be met

with. They are mostly imported from North America, and, like ourselves, they are subject to a seasoning disease, which equally cuts off man and horse. The one I have purchased was lately brought from Barbadoes, where he has remained a considerable time since his arrival from North America, and I shall deem myself fortunate, if he should have already withstood a seasoning in that island, which may protect him from further sickness here.

We are again looking forward to dry and fine weather, for although the present wet season has only been set in about a month, it is supposed, from the circumstance of most of the rain now falling in the night, that it may be already declining. I forget whether I before remarked to you, that we have not, even in what is termed the rainy season, any thick and foggy days like those of an English November. The wet season is a rapid alternation of dark cloud, with a clear atmosphere, and bright sun-shine. No foggy damps succeed the rushing torrents: the black cloud, from which they fall, pours forth its streams, exhausts itself, and passes away—leaving the obscured rays of the sun again free to reach the earth; and all is clear and bright between the heavy peltings of the storm.

LETTER XVII.

Christmas weather in Guiana. Festivities of the season not neglected by the colonists. Observed by the blacks. Large sums given to the slaves. Christmas visitings of the negroes. Christmas excursion of Captain Sturt and the author in a canoe. Orange season. Plantains a most valuable food. Example of the sad hardships of slavery. Case of intermittent fever in a planter. Remarkable event concerning a comrade's boots. Author's voyage from Mahaica to Starbroek. News of the Spanish war reaches Guiana—also of the pacific proposals of Lord Malmesbury being rejected. Author's remarks respecting an insecure and dishonorable peace.

December 26th.

IN tracing the date of this letter, I am reminded of the freezing season under which you are shivering in England—and a sense of cold chills me as I pursue the association: but you will be persuaded that this is the mere effect of imagination, when I tell you, that the thermometer, at noon, is usually about 83; and that, from using only moderate exercise, I am so streamed with perspiration as to make it necessary to change my clothes four or five times in the course of the day: even at this moment from only the slight ex-

ertion of writing, the drops fall so rapidly from the backs of my hands, as to spoil my paper, and I almost fear, to such a degree, as to render my letter illegible.

On the subject of Christmas, I should tell you that it is not less a period of festivity, here, than in England. The planters make parties, and the merry feasting of the season goes round, unchilled with its frosty coldness. It is likewise a holyday to the slaves, who usually receive some indulgence of food, and some present of clothing to augment the happiness of the festival. We have seen new hats distributed among the men of a whole gang, and a bit of coarse canvass for a petticoat given to each of the women, and never were children more delighted with new toys, than were these poor beings on the joyous occasion of receiving these humble, but to them splendid offerings. Some fresh meat was also given to them as a high feast for dinner, and, in the evening, their loved African dance crowned the holyday. Parties of them go from the different plantations to spend the mirthful hours with their more particular friends or acquaintances of the neighbouring estates, and it is a happy meeting of relatives,

lovers, and fellow-passengers who have voyaged together from their native Africa. The whole country exhibits one moving scene of dancing gaiety. Merry crowds are met in every quarter, dressed out in all the gaudy trappings they can collect, and with their hair cut, and fashioned into multitudes of whimsical shapes, representing various figures of helmets, wigs, crowns and the like ; and decorated with a profusion of beads, bits of ribbon, and other tinsel ornaments.

But you will wish to know how your friend passed the Christmas, and as it was in a way somewhat adventurous, it may not be altogether devoid of interest.—I was at Mahaica, and was invited to accompany captain Sturt, and other officers, to a plantation a few miles from the barracks, to eat my Christmas dinner. Having no horses, captain Sturt, who is quite a seaman and very fond of the water, offered to take me in a small canoe, which he had procured from the Indians. We accordingly put to sea in order to proceed down the coast, but we had scarcely escaped from the creek, before our little barque was tossed about like an egg-shell upon the surface of the water. The sea was rough ; the wind con-

trary; and the breakers running frightfully high. Still the captain felt assured that we could make our passage. I very much doubted it, but as he was by far the best seaman I was unwilling to interrupt the excursion by any scruples of my own. Two slaves had been placed in the centre of the canoe, with calabashes to bail out the water; and as the ends were considerably above the level of the sea, even if the middle was filled, it was scarcely possible that the canoe could sink, the great danger therefore consisted in the risk of her being upset. We fought about for some time, almost constantly tacking from side to side on account of the contrary wind. Full employment was found for our two negroes in bailing out the water which beat into the canoe, and we had a very complete washing from the dashing of the waves and breakers. Finding that we made very little progress, and that the sea grew still rougher as we advanced, the captain was at length satisfied that it was in vain to persevere, and we abandoned the expedition, by putting about and running over the heavy waves, directly before the wind, back into the creek from whence we had embarked. Horses were not to be had, and the heat was too great to allow of our undertaking the journey

on foot, we therefore gave up all thoughts of joining the party, and contented ourselves with eating roast beef at the barracks, and drinking to our friends in Old England—anticipating a whole year in the delightful idea of passing the next Christmas amongst them in London.

I must not neglect to tell you that Christmas is here the high season for oranges. They are now ripe and in their greatest perfection. You will be surprised to hear what quantities I am in the daily habit of consuming. From six to twelve, pulled fresh from the tree, make my usual allowance before breakfast, and I commonly take as many in the evening, besides eating great numbers in the course of the day. Indeed fruit and vegetables form almost the whole of my diet, and I now suffer no distress on account of our scanty supply of animal provisions. As was predicted to me, I am become so fond of plantains as scarcely to require any other food, and I am persuaded that if they could be had in all climates, they would be found, without exception, the most valuable production of the earth. Roasted, they serve as bread—fried, they are as meat and as fruit—

boiled, they are a substitute for potatoes, and beat into a paste, they form excellent pudding. Like the slaves I now eat them, morning, noon, and night. At breakfast they are my bread and butter—at dinner my meat and pudding—and at tea-time my only cake and toast.

A very distressing case has been related to us within these few days, exposing the sad hardships, and the shameful abuse of power to which the people of colour are sometimes subjected. A young man, a mulatto, under the agitation of extreme distress, presented himself before the officers at Mahaica, complaining of the cruel severities he had experienced from a Dutchman, holding an office of high trust in the colony of Essequibo. Having been called upon business to Barbadoes, he had left a sister at home, to whom he was very affectionately attached, and whom, during his absence, this arbitrary magistrate took an opportunity of seducing; and from his not letting the subject pass so tacitly as the Dutchman might have wished, on his return, a feigned cause of complaint was preferred against him, and he was thrown into prison, where he has been lying ever since, suffering the various hard-

ships and severities dictated by this man of power; some of which could only be surpassed by the cruelty of an Eastern Tippoo. He at length effected his escape, and is now in concealment. His application to the commanding officer at Mahaica, was to implore him to interest the commandant of the colonies in his behalf; remarking that if he should not succeed in obtaining some powerful intercession, his life must inevitably be sacrificed; for, whenever he should be discovered, a prison would again be his lot, and he should be made to suffer cruelties, or be left to languish under hardships that would soon destroy him.

On my way from Stabroek to Mahaica I lately slept at the house of a gentleman who related to me a very striking case of intermittent fever, under which he had laboured for three quarters of a year, and which during the whole of that time had regularly returned at the periods of the spring tides. He commonly felt unwell on the third day previous to the full, and the change of the moon, and the fever was at the worst on the day of the change, after which it decreased, and on the second or third day of the decline of the

spring tides he was again well, and felt himself secure for the next fortnight. If he had any particular business to transact, or any important engagement to plan, he regularly consulted the almanack in order so to arrange that they might not interfere with his periods of sickness. He remarked that he could at any time interrupt the return of the fever, by taking a large quantity of Peruvian bark, but added, that he had such an utter aversion to medicine, that rather than have recourse to it, he should have supported the disease still longer, had it not begun to prey upon his constitution, by rendering him feeble during the periods of intermission.

You know how essentially promotion in the army is said to alleviate the grief arising from the loss of a comrade; but you would be surprized to witness how lightly men on service can treat the dangers which surround them, and how little they regard sickness until it reaches themselves, notwithstanding that many of them would tremble more to go into an hospital than to face the enemy's cannon. It commonly happens, that a few days after the funeral, the clothes and baggage of a deceased officer are disposed of by auction,

when, frequently, the jokes and witticisms, which pass among the purchasers, betray the slight impression made by the loss that occasioned the sale. For instance, on a pair of boots being held up for a bidding, one officer said to another, "You had better buy these boots, they will just suit you." "No" replied the other, looking down to his comrade's legs, "it is your turn next, and yours will fit me better: I shall have them in a few days." So it happened, and true enough, the boots then on the legs of his friend, soon—alas! too soon, were his!

You will believe that after such a conversation, he could have no satisfaction in wearing them:—nor was such the object of his making the purchase. He was actuated by a more amiable motive:—the boots are carefully preserved in memory of his comrade, and of one of their latest meetings.

You will believe that the angry fates must surely have decreed me ill, whenever my person shall be exposed to the mercy of the fickle god of the deep, when I tell you that on my late return from Mahaica, I embarked under the most favorable auspices, assured of

making the passage to Stabroek within the space of three hours, but as usual, adverse events rendered the voyage very tedious and distressing. Severe vomiting quickly seized me, and instead of being soon released, I had the misery of being detained a whole day and night on board a comfortless vessel, without even the accommodation of a covering for my head. The cabin was crammed full with bales of cotton, which prevented all retreat from the sun, as well as from the damp and rain of the night. The whole day passed in trouble and sickness, and, in the evening, the only protection I had from the heavy torrents which deluged the vessel, was to thrust myself in between the cotton bags and the deck, lying upon my back with my face almost touching the boards, and my legs hanging out exposed to the rain in the open hatchway.

In this distressing posture, after the heat and sickness of a most painfully tedious day, had I to pass a still more wearisome night; and, to augment the affliction, had the further annoyance of a high-favored Dutchman crowding into the same birth, and almost poisoning me with fumes of gin, and other less grateful

odours. It will be granted that this was not a situation to be envied : yet how do the ills of life diminish upon a comparison with the sufferings of others ! While I was complaining of my hard fate, in finding only partial protection from the weather, three poor Africans were lying shivering at my feet, in the open hatchway, exposed quite naked to the rain.

We now learn that war is openly declared with Spain. It is likewise rumoured that the terms of peace offered by Lord Malmfbury have been rejected by the French, and that the contest is to be prosecuted with increased vigour. Direful as are the effects of this sanguinary war, I trust there is no Englishman, who would not rather bleed in the cause of his country, than see the honor and security of England trampled down by the maniacal rabble of revolutionary France. Peace is desirable, but however ardently to be wished for, the spirit of Englishmen will never allow them, tamely, to lay down their arms, and purchase the yoke of dependence, by compromising the security of their country. Delightful as it would be to me to return to my friends, and my native England, I would ra-

ther be long detained from them, amidst all the perils of war and disease, than be recalled to witness any disgraceful humiliation of our justly proud and happy island.

LETTER XVIII.

Author again visits Mynbeer Bercheych. Breakfast at the Hermitage. Some account of the great Ant-eater of Guiana. Ingenuity of the Mocking bird regarding the structure and situation of its nest. Opinion of Buffon:—of Darwin. The nests of ants—used as food for chickens. Mynbeer Bercheych visits the officers at Mabaica. Takes dinner with them in presence of a party of Indians. Another party of Indians come down to the barracks. Unsuccessful attempts made by the officers to animate or amuse them.

Demarara, Dec.

I HAVE lately had an opportunity of repeating my visit to the eccentric Bercheych. Having slept on my way at Mr. Graham's, I rode from thence in the morning to take my breakfast tête-à-tête, with this solitary yet social and intelligent recluse. Although unexpected, he instantly addressed me by name, and received me in the most friendly manner, telling me that he was mindful of his promise, and that some Indians were at work upon the model of house and furniture, which he had offered to procure for me.

A most ample breakfast was quickly set before us, served with great neatness and order, and consisting of broiled chicken, salt-fish, eggs, plantains, bread, cassada, and wine and water. I was delighted, as before, with his conversation and remarks, and was particularly gratified with the account he gave me of that singular animal the great Ant-eater, which he had had frequent opportunities of seeing both dead and alive, his people having shot several of them. The weight of this peculiar animal is commonly from 150lb. to 200lb. He has a very small head, covered with hair as soft as velvet ; his tail is immensely large, flat, and covered with long hair, which is even stronger than the bristles of a hog. His feet are armed with long claws, forming very strong offensive weapons. By means of his claws, and his tail, he is able to defend himself against even the tiger ; and in some instances has been known to conquer that fierce and powerful animal. When attacked, he fights with his strong claws, defending his head by wrapping it up in his broad tail of bristles, which the tiger cannot penetrate. He has a tongue of very uncommon length, which is moistened with saliva of a sweetish flavour.

As the name implies, ants are his food, and his mode of procuring it is by thrusting his deceitful tongue into a nest of these insects, when, allured by the sweetness of the saliva, they settle upon it in great numbers, and the animal, by drawing it in, swallows up whole hosts of them at once. The high relish, no doubt, excites an increased secretion, and with his tongue again sweetly baited, he entraps new victims — repeating the slaughter until his appetite is satiated with the myriads of slain.

You will not deem it *mal-à-propos* if I follow this account of the peculiarities of one of the animals of Guiana, with a statement of what I have lately observed respecting the habits of a bird, and an insect of this country.

Walking with one of the gentlemen of the hospital department, down to the bottom of a coffee estate which leads into the wild woods; our attention was arrested by the singular appearance of numbers of the trees at the entrance of the forest; many of which had pendulous bodies, like common cabbage-nets

stuffed with straw, hanging from the extremities of their lofty branches; and others, huge black masses, conveying the idea of large animals, adhering to their trunks. Upon approaching nearer to them we discovered that the former were the nests of birds; the latter — of ants!

The bird-nests were the fabrication of a species here termed the mocking-bird, but unlike that of imitative note so named in the Northern States of this continent. Both the construction and situation of these nests are peculiarly ingenious. They are not built upon, nor within any part of the tree, but are fastened to the outermost twigs of the remotest branches, as if tied to them with strings; and it is extremely difficult to imagine how, in this suspended and pensive form, the building of them can be effected; for their appearance would suggest the idea that they must have been first constructed, then carried up whole, and hung upon the twigs which support them. They are deep and cylindrical like long nets or purses, from which figure, together with the ready flexibility of the tender branches that bear

them, they are in no danger of being overturned by the breeze, nor of having their eggs, or young, tossed out by sudden gusts of wind. The appearance of them, as they hang waving in the breeze, is very remarkable, and some of the trees are so thickly beset with them that, at a short distance, it is difficult to distinguish which are most numerous, these nests or the leaves. The situation of them is admirably chosen for the purpose of protection against the various species of monkeys, which infest the woods—none of these marauders being able to support themselves upon the slender twigs from which the nests are suspended. Buffon would tell us that an unerring instinct had taught these birds thus to protect their eggs, and their young:—Darwin would attribute it to reason and experience. But the fact of the younger birds selecting the same situation, and constructing their nests, even the first season, with as great perfection as their parents, would seem to offer an insurmountable objection to the opinion which refers it to a reasoning faculty. Nothing of regular advancement,—nothing of progressive improvement is displayed, all is perfection from the beginning, and experience begets no

superiority ; for it is not seen that either age or repetition afford the usual advantages of improved intellect—the youngest bird being equally ingenious, and equally perfect in his architecture as the oldest.

The ant-nests are immense masses of black earth, built upon the trunks of the trees ; many of them so high, and of such extraordinary bulk, as to render it matter of surprize, how even the combined industry of such minute insects could have carried up, and worked together such prodigious accumulations. One of these nests very much resembled a large black bear clinging round the tree ; nor was it till we came near enough to examine it closely that we could believe it to be the masonry—the dwelling-house and castle of these diminutive artists.

I thrust the end of my cane into several of the nests, breaking through the outer walls of the mansions ; when instantly whole hosts of ants issued forth from the openings. Upon breaking down a part of one of these buildings to examine it more minutely, I found that although the exterior surface was smooth

and uniform, the interior was constructed into cells somewhat of a regular figure, and very much resembling the honey-comb of bees.

We find that these nests are converted to an useful purpose—being given as food to young chickens. Frequently the trees, upon which they are built, are cut down for the sole purpose of obtaining them. The mode of using them is by breaking off a portion of the cellular earth, from the great mass, and sticking it upon a pole, or otherwise placing it over the lattice-work of the pen in which the hen and her brood are confined, in order that the young of the ants may fall out of their cells to the ground; where they are, instantly, devoured by the chickens.

On the day after my breakfast visit at the cottage, hermit Bercheych, as he is often called, came, in great state, to dine with us at the barracks. He was paddled down the creek in his large canoe, by six fine slaves, and it was pleasing to observe what profound attention and respect were borne this old gentleman by his negroes, who comported them-

selves with a degree of regularity and decorum worthy the best ordered domestics of Europe.

Our party was small, and we sat down to dinner in the presence of a group of naked Indians, who that day made us a visit from the woods. It was not in our power, even with our best attentions, to make a sufficient return for the many marks of hospitality we had met with at the hermitage, but our guest expressed himself happy, and was lively and entertaining as ever. The few hours we had of his society passed very pleasantly, and we regretted extremely that the tide, and the approach of evening took him from us early after dinner.

Absorbed with the attentions due to the accomplished and methodic Bercheych, we were less regardful of our strangers from the woods than was usual; but we have lately been visited by another party of the bucks, to whom we earnestly devoted our attentions, during the short time they remained among us. We made it a settled experiment to endeavour to rouse them from that fixed apathy and indifference which form so striking

a feature of their character. By signs we attempted to lead them into a sort of conversation. We gave them rum to drink,—brought out bows and arrows to shoot with—played the German flute to them—beat the drum, and piped the fife—but all in vain! Nothing of mirth or vivacity was excited. Rum possessed the only charm: of this both the men and women drank glass after glass as fast as it was given them.

Cynics have said that the gift of speech is a blessing seldom denied to the ladies—but we remarked that these naked wood-nymphs were peculiarly taciturn. They seemed even more tranquil and incurious than the men. They sat two upon a chair, the whole time, with their backs towards us, and were not inspired by any thing that occurred to move a single feature or a muscle—nor were the men much more animated: one of them, who appeared to be very old, had in his hand a piece of a large and coarse reed, nearly two feet long, with two or three holes cut in it like a flute. With this we did prevail upon him to blow a few very harsh and simple notes, and these he seemed to consider very

superior to all the varied sounds of the German flute, which was played to him by one of the officers ; for, although he had seemed to listen to it with some attention, he refused to accept the flute in exchange for his reed. After trying various other means to rouse them into animation, we caused the drum and fife to be played, unexpectedly, below the window, where they were sitting. This seemed to strike the ear, and they for a moment appeared to listen, but nothing of impulse was betrayed—nothing of vivacity overspread their features—nor did an individual of them so far forget his gravity as to rise from his seat to look out at the window.

LETTER XIX.

Author addresses his friend on returning from the burial of a comrade. Fate of medical assistants. Rapid destruction from fever. The strongest health no security. Afflicting impression of the funeral. Remarks upon its mixed influence. The funeral procession dispensed with in the British corps. Continued by the Dutch. Remarks on the Hollanders' devotion to custom. They sound the dead march at the door of the hospital. Author applies to have this ceremony suspended. Extract of a letter from an officer to his friend concerning the author's illness. Unfinished letter from the author's late assistant to his father. Report of his death discredited, on account of his being seen in health only a short time before. Quiet change of the year. News received of the capture of Admiral Lucas's fleet by Sir Keith Elphinstone. Rumour of hostilities between America and France. Fresh provisions obtained for the hospital. Their effect upon the sick.

La Bourgade, Jan. 8th..

YOU will comprehend the sentiment which associates your image with the sadness of the present hour. It is one of those periods when the sickened mind turns from all common objects, and clings to the remembrance of those we hold most dear. Having just returned from the funeral of one of my com-

rades, who died in the adjoining chamber this morning, and whose remains I have this evening followed to the grave, I find that the heavy depression of the occasion admits of no relief from the immediate circumstances around me, therefore I take up my pen to seek alleviation in an appeal to the bosom of friendship and of sympathy. I had before experienced the impressive solemnity of a military funeral, but the awful gloom, connecting with the procession, had not weighed upon me with all the affliction of the present moment. Of six gentlemen who accompanied me from Barbadoes, as assistants in the hospital department, three had died, one was sent to England with invalids, and the other two had, for some time past, resided in the same house with myself. Early this morning I was called from my bed to visit one of these, who had been a very short time ill, and was taken worse in the night. You will believe that I quickly obeyed the summons: but although I lost no time in putting on my clothes, and hastening to his room, on reaching his bed-side I found him a lifeless corpse! The case of this young man shews the very perilous situation of Europeans in this climate, and proves with

how much truth it may be said that to-day we are well—to-morrow in fever, and—next day in the grave! Nor do health and vigour give any security; for he who to-day boasts the greatest strength, to-morrow, perhaps, is extended in his coffin. I need not tell you that this melancholy scene has spread a gloomy sadness among us: each person on viewing his friend, or reflecting into his own bosom, feels conscious that in only a few short hours the same relentless destroyer may subject him to a similar fate; and accordingly, each, in silence, seems to regard the other as a friend to whom he is about to bid an eternal adieu. The influence of such an impression could not be wholly resisted, and a sense of deep sorrow and anxiety at this moment clouds every brow.

Most of the officers of the garrison attended the funeral, and, when following the corpse in slow and doleful procession, with the band playing the dead march, and the minute-drum beating in hollow sound, the agonized feelings of the occasion became still more poignant from the conviction that, perhaps, before another day had passed, others of us might be

extended at the side of the comrade, whose loss we now deplored.

The slow music, and the solemn parade with which a military funeral is accompanied, may be said to render it most sublimely distressing, for while the afflicted mind sinks as it were into the very grave, it seems transported beyond all sublunary influence. Indeed the mixed and vivid sensations of such a moment can neither be described nor comprehended—they must be felt to be understood, for the soul seems to be, at the same time, plunged into the profoundest depths of misery, and to thrill with all the harmonic joys of heaven.

I have before remarked to you, that from the strong tendency of such awful ceremonies to spread gloomy apprehensions among the living, it were desirable that the parade of military funerals should be dispensed with, in a climate where the troops may, at all moments, be under feelings of alarm from the peril of disease; yet may it be a question, with some, in how far it were politic to deprive the soldier of this last and honorable mark of

distinction, the sentiment attaching to which is, no doubt, one among the many causes which inspire to brave and noble conduct.

Among the soldiers of our own battalions, its disuse has been found both wise and necessary, for were it to be employed on all occasions, in these climates, it might, not only, too often call those in health to the performance of a distressful duty, but it would also become a sadly frequent memento to the sick, by reminding them that a comrade was journeying, whither it might soon be their fate to follow him—the effect of which, added to the common apprehension with respect to disease, might produce a degree of depression, which no means could remedy. Yet among the formal Dutch the practice, is continued; for, perhaps, it were easier to overturn the Alps, than to do away the prejudices of the Hollanders, whose inflexible attachment to custom, and to ceremony, reigns paramount in all their proceedings. Questions of expediency yield to questions of usage, and it must be proved to be a glaring injury, indeed, to the living, before a Dutchman could consent to forego an established observance to the dead.

A few days ago, a Dutch soldier having died in the hospital, due notice was sent to the serjeant of his company, in the expectation that the body would be quietly removed, and the funeral conducted without disturbing the sick ; but soon afterwards we were surprised by hearing the dead march sounding at the very door of the hospital : and, on hastening thither to stop the music, until it should be out of the hearing of the sick, and the dying, I found the band and a regular firing party assembled, in due form, to conduct the corpse with all the ceremony of military honors to the grave.

As a mark of respect to their deceased comrade, it pleased me, yet, consistent with my duty to the sick, I was compelled to interrupt the proceeding, and finding in this instance, that I had to contend with invincible prejudice, I wrote to the Dutch commander to request, that on future occasions, if it was deemed requisite, to persist in the ceremony, directions might be given for the music to meet the procession, at some distance upon the road, where it could not be heard by those who were lying in the hospital.

Notwithstanding the deep affliction of the present hour, many as I mentioned to you before, even amidst all the dangers of climate and of war, think very lightly of sickness until it reaches themselves. In further proof of which I may give you an extract from a letter, written by an officer to my poor lost assistant, at the time I was ill with yellow fever, and now found among his effects—"I am sorry" writes the officer "to hear of Dr. Pinckard's dangerous state, but I shall the less regret his loss if it gives a step to my friend"—or in other words "*let him be released, and I promise not to grieve so my friend gains promotion!*"—Poor fellow! my death could have caused as little promotion to him, as his now gives to me!

It is remarkable, that among his papers we also find an unfinished letter, begun only a day or two ago, to his father, in which he speaks of being uncommonly well, and gratefully offers thanks to the Deity for the blessing of such excellent health.

Soon after he expired, a man called who had some business with him, and on being

told that he was dead, he would not leave the house, but insisted that we were deceiving him, saying that he had seen him in the town *perfectly well* "only a day or two before!"

But to escape from this painful theme, let me tell you that before our unhappy loss we had hailed the new year in propitious greetings. It had opened upon us unmarked with any peculiar feature : without being drowned in mirth, the un-plumed deputy of the grim scythe-bearer retired in silent tranquillity ; while equal modesty marked the birth of his new-winged successor. No loud adieux, nor festive joys proclaimed the period. It passed in soft repose, and I remained unconscious of the change, until the youthful messenger of the hoary monitor gently flew in at my chamber window, and whispered me to my daily round of duty.

We have been some time without news from your side the Atlantic ; but a single paper is now brought to us by the captain of a ship from Glasgow, and you will not be surprised to learn that it is worn to shreds, (by passing through the hands of the whole gar-

rison,) when I tell you that it contains the first intimation we have received of an entire fleet, commanded by Admiral Lucas, captured by the brave Sir Keith Elphinstone at the Cape of Good Hope. At this news we feel that our hearts beat in unison with all yours at home, for it is in such victories that we may look for peace, and, what is even of greater consequence, for security against a speedy renewal of the war.

By the same paper we also learn, that public rumour speaks of hostilities between America and France, in consequence of the piratical conduct of the latter, towards the American ships and commerce. Thus while we read of one circumstance that might tend to a peace, we find others which threaten to spread far wider the sad ravages of war.

After being for some time without fresh animal provisions, it has happened that the hospital has been supplied with them several times within the last few days : but, unhappily, the effect they have produced upon the bowels of the sick, has more than counteracted the benefit which they might have derived from them.

- Aware that this was not an unfrequent occurrence, we had endeavored to guard against it by issuing the fresh meat only in small portions at a time, yet, from their stomachs having been so long unaccustomed to it, and from the debilitated state of the patients, the laxative effect was very considerable, nearly the whole of the convalescents having been attacked with a troublesome Diarrhœa.

LETTER XX.

Coincidence of fever and the spring tides. Case of Mr. Beete. Birth-day review. Tardy march of the Dutch troops to the field. Birth-day dinner. Ball at the Fort. Excessive fatigue supported by the ladies in dancing. Delicate supper swallowed by a Dutch lady. Improved health of the troops. Weekly return without a casualty.

Demarara, Jan. 21.

WE have again had abundant occasion to remark the fact regarding the coincidence between the returns of fever in this climate, and the periods of the spring tides. Only a few days ago, at the time of full moon, Mr. Beete (the commissary) Mr. Mulheran (one of our assistants in the medical department) and six of the convalescents in the hospital were attacked with a relapse of fever, or what is here called "the tides"—three were cases of continued fever—five of intermittent: but it is not in the paroxysms of intermittent, and the relapses of fever, only, that the disease appears to be influenced by the recurrence of the spring tides, for we now find that the primary invasion of the disorder is more fre-

quent, and the number of fever-patients admitted into the hospital greater, at these periods, than at any other time.

The case of Mr. Beete is peculiar ; and places the fact in a very striking light. He has been long resident in the West Indies, and from having withstood all the late perils of disease at Grenada, might be regarded as, in a great degree, secure against that particular form of the fever which is so fatal to newly arrived Europeans : but, very soon after he came from the islands to Demarara, he was attacked with it, in the form which it more commonly assumes among the creoles, and those who have been long on this shore of the Atlantic, viz. as an intermittent, yet not returning as a quotidian, a tertian, or a quartan, but as a quindeciman, and so regularly observing its type that, if referred to its place in a system of nosology, it might justly be ranked among the species of intermittent fever, under the title of quindecimana. It has continued ever since, returning at intervals of a fortnight, with the exacerbations correctly obeying the periods of new and full moon, but he has always the power of interrupting it, and

averting the paroxysm by a copious use of the bark for only a day or two previous to the time of spring tide, and his friends very earnestly hope that he will soon, so far subdue his aversion to the taking of medicine, as to employ it in sufficient quantity wholly to eradicate the disease. In the four other cases of intermittent, the fever assumes the ordinary quotidian, or the tertian type. In the cases wherein the disorder appears in its continued form, the relapses are, frequently, not less severe than the original attack.

The 18th instant, being the Queen's birth-day, we honored it in public and private rejoicing, and as our days of festival are few, you will believe that due justice was done to the occasion. In the morning we had a general review of the troops ; afterwards a large party dined, and drank her Majesty's health with the commandant : and, in the evening, the officers gave a splendid ball at the fort.

The review afforded great satisfaction to the inhabitants, by placing before them a fine body of troops, armed in the defence of the

colony. They were of different nations, different colours, and different uniform; yet from the excellent discipline instilled among them by the unwearied attentions of the commandant and the officers, their appearance in the field was highly military, and their manœuvres executed with much of order and correctness. The line, if not formidable, was very respectable. On the right were the British troops, and the corps of Demarara volunteers, in scarlet uniform: on the left were the Dutch, in blue: in the centre the fine battalion of South American rangers, in white: and, on each wing a party of the royal artillery.

In going to the field either the Hollanders had neglected their usual punctuality, or all the others had assembled before the appointed hour; for the Dutch corps did not arrive until long after these had taken their ground; a circumstance which was rendered more remarkable, on account of these formal beings continuing their march in flow step, even after they appeared in sight, and perceived that the commandant with all the officers, and the troops, were in the field waiting for them. You will not wonder that upon seeing them

the impatient crowd exclaimed "a funeral! "a funeral!" for, in verity their movement had far more the air of a funeral procession, than a march to a review: but it is their custom to proceed to the field, on such occasions, in slow time; and custom, among the Dutch, would seem to be as sacred as the Persian laws.

At the dinner, the board was enriched with all the dainties of the country, and the appetite provoked by choice wines and cheering music. The governor, the fiscal, most of the officers, and many of the principal inhabitants of the colony, were present. A military band enlivened the banquet, and merry toasts and songs caused the bumper glass to move in much quicker time, than the Dutchmen had marched to the review. I left the table early, in order to make my round of duty at the hospital, and joined the party again in the evening at the ball, where, in a group of about seventy persons, we met all the beauty and fashion of the colony. The occurrences best worth noting to you were—the surprising exertion supported by the ladies in dancing—

and the astonishing supper-appetites betrayed by some of the Dutch females. In the whole party, the number of ladies did not exceed sixteen, so that many of the gentlemen, in the early part of the evening, had to lament the want of partners in the dance ; yet such was the prowess of the fair, that, before the dancing ceased, each had subdued her triple round of beaux ; and it fell to their lot to complain of the want of partners. The exercise used by the ladies was truly astonishing, and far exceeded all that I could have believed them capable of supporting ; but, call it pleasure, and the body is strong. If such excess had been recommended, as necessary for any other purpose, it would no doubt have been regarded as dangerous and destructive fatigue. Some of them, with only the interval of 'supper-time, danced country dances, and cotillions, from nine o'clock in the evening, until day-light in the morning ; in a room where, probably, the heat was above 90 degrees. Knowing this, you will not be surprized that, although early in the evening, the beaux had to contend for belles—late in the morning the belles had to seek for beaux.

At supper, few as the ladies were, it happened to be my fortune to be placed between two of them : but of one only I have now to speak ; yet let me first remark that the whole colony was ransacked to furnish the table ; which was most sumptuously and profusely spread. On my noticing the uncommon crowd of dishes, an officer dryly replied—“ perhaps you are not aware that the party to “ be entertained is Dutch.”—I thought it fully sufficient for five such parties, whether Dutch, English, or French ; but if all had eaten like the lady in question, I must have been very egregiously deceived. Many others also enjoyed the feast most abundantly, and their capacious appetites excited alternate sensations of diversion and surprise—not to say—disgust !

The lady at my right elbow, was very large, and of true Dutch figure. Her person may be well described in two words—broad and bulky ! By some accident she had sprained her wrist, and this formed a ready apology for appealing to my particular attention, which, from not being in the habit of eating supper, I could the better devote to her service : but I almost fear to note to you the fact I have to

relate, lest you should imagine that I assume a traveller's privilege, and indulge in the marvellous at the expence of a fair associate guest. Let me therefore premise, that in what follows, the boundaries of sober truth are not out-stepped one single iota ; for I not only helped the lady to her meats, and poured forth her wines, but was further called upon to cut her food, into small pieces, ready for the fork, by which I had the opportunity of observing literally *every mouthful*.

Scarcely had we taken our seats, before my fair neighbour requested me to help her to a glass of claret, of which I found a *full* bottle standing *between* us. The ceremony of a gentleman drinking at the same time was not deemed essential ; I therefore tasted but very lightly : yet it somehow happened, and without the bottle being once removed, that, before the supper was at end, the gentle lady was compelled to have recourse to a second glass or two of Madeira, to supply the deficiencies of our *empty* bottle ! With this, her eating was in no degree at variance, for she commenced by forming a solid stratum of two heavy slices of fat ham, after which I

helped her from no less than *fourteen* other dishes, of each of which, to my surprise, she partook with seeming appetite ! Such a supper I had not before seen swallowed by man, woman, or any thing in human shape ! And though satiated, not satisfied, she afterwards desired me to reach towards her several of the dishes of fruit, from each of which, after liberally tasting, she *privately* gave a portion to a female slave, who was standing at her back ; and when she rose to leave the supper room, I observed *under her chair* a loaded plate of fruits and sweets, which, without doubt, the negress had received instructions to convey home to regale her mistress on the morrow. This, by the by, is a custom, which I have more than once seen practised by foreign ladies, both Dutch and French !

But what will surprise you most is, to know that after this *light supper*, my lady of Turkey stomach *briskly* resumed the merry dance ! and, when I retired at five o'clock in the morning, she remained tripping it away as light as Batavian clay !

It affords me real pleasure to be able to remark that we have entered the more cordially into the late festivity on account of the improved state of our sick list, and from the happy circumstance of the last weekly return of the hospital not containing even a single casualty. This is a subject of great and peculiar satisfaction to the medical officers; it being the first week since our arrival in these colonies, that we have had the opportunity of making out a weekly return, without marking some one in the fatal column. But the healthy season is now setting in, and we are taught to expect nearly four months of dry weather, with a salubrious breeze, which is to waft away all our maladies. I have been too much in the habit of busy employment to feel any desire to sit down in idleness; yet, upon such terms, I could be very happy to remain without duty.

LETTER XX.

Attack of the Spaniards from Oronoko. Repulsed from the post of Moroko by the Dutch troops in the British service. The news brought to head quarters by Indian couriers. Conversation with some slaves on the subject of freedom. Replies of a negress. Remarks of an intelligent negro. The yellow fever attacks the same person various times. A bull made by one of the author's assistants. Example of yellowness of the body from heat without fever. Creoles greater invalids than Europeans. Contending influence of an elegant poet, and the god of arms.

Demarara, Feb. 11.

A considerable time has now passed since our arrival upon this coast, and, having remained so long without any interruption, we had almost believed that the many foes upon our borders meant to leave us in quiet possession of the colonies we had taken ; but we have, at length, been assailed from the quarter, whence we least expected it, having had a skirmish with the Spaniards to leeward, instead of

the Dutch or French, who in more imposing aspect, threatened us from windward. Fixing upon a favorable moment when they expected that the garrison might be sunk in repose, after the festivities of the Queen's birth-day, a party of Spaniards crossed the river Oronoko in the night of the 19th. inst. and made an attack upon our out-post at Moroko, the remotest point of the colony of Essequibo. To their disappointment our troops were upon the alert, and they were observed before they landed. Quickly the whole force at the post was under arms, and at stepping on shore the Dons met a very warm and lively reception. The firing was returned on the part of the Spaniards, who boldly rushed forward, expecting to subdue the garrison, but, after the contest had continued a short time, they were defeated, and, some being killed, some wounded, and others driven into the river, those who were able to make their escape, precipitately took to their boats and retreated. Happily not one of our men was killed, but the commanding officer and nine of the soldiers were wounded, some of the latter, we fear, mortally. This is the first rencontre we have had with the enemy since our

arrival in Guiana ; and from the result it is probable that the next assault will not be from the quarter of the Oronoko.

Very much to their honor, this gallant defence of our out-post, was made by Captain Rochelle and a party of the Dutch troops, who had surrendered on our taking the colonies, and afterwards entered into the service of his Majesty. They fought with great bravery, and gave a satisfactory proof that they merited the confidence reposed in them, in appointing them to the defence of this important station.

Two of the Bucks, or Indians, were dispatched from the post, to bring us the news of the action, and they, with the zeal and punctuality of more regular couriers, reached Stabroek on the 23d. four days after the battle. According to my custom, I engaged these men of the woods, each evening during their stay, to join me in my favorite exercise of shooting with the bow and arrow.

I have lately amused myself by taking frequent opportunities of engaging in con-

versation with different negroes, both men and women, with the view of ascertaining what was the state of their intellects, and particularly what were their sentiments with regard to the subject of freedom and slavery ; and when I tell you that I was careful to select those who were the most intelligent, you will be surprized to learn the very limited extent of their knowledge. Their utmost ambition does not go beyond the procuring of food, with the little clothing they wear, and medicine when sick ; nor in any other view do they seem to comprehend the advantages of freedom ; and, being assured of these from their masters, while they remain slaves, they have a sense of terror at the idea of being made free : yet I have remarked that some of the women speak in raptures on the subject of obtaining their liberty ; but, upon further questioning them, I have always discovered that it was not from any just sense of independence ; but from the mere desire of becoming the sultana of a white man, and being placed by him above the ordinary slaves of his house.

I give you the following conversation, literally as it passed ; from which you will be able to form a more correct judgment of the sentiments which dictated the replies.

Would you not like to go to England ?

No ! Backra country no good ! In Neger country they no flog 'em, and dat better dan Backra country.

Should you not wish to be free ?

O yes ! O yes !

And if you were free, where would you live, and what would you do ?

Live wid dem dat buy me free.

Well ! and would you not go with them to England ?

No ! me 'fraid to go where 'em all Backra. Me love for see Neger here and dere ; me 'fraid for see all Backra.

But if those, who bought you free, should go away and leave you ?

Den me live wid one Backra man, and
hab one slave for work for me.

And if this Backra man should die ?

Den me live wid one other Backra man.

This was the utmost extent of all she desired on earth. She would remain with any family that should make her free, but if they should leave the colony, she would go and live with a white man, and prevail upon him to buy her a slave ; and if this protector should die, then she would seek for another white man, and go and live with him ; and so on, from one white man to another, as often as they should die, or leave the colony. It was a very common reply from many of them to the question,—What would you do were you free?—Live wid de Backra man dat buy me free, wash him linen, and keep him clean !

Another very frequent answer, both from the men and women, to the question,—Would you not like to be free ? was—

If me free—who gib me food—who gib me clothes—who send me a doctor when me sick !

Among those who condemned freedom was a very fine negro, who was born in the colony ; and who speaks better English, and is more intelligent than nine tenths of the slaves who have been imported. This man insisted that he would not accept his freedom, were it offered him, but that he would prefer to remain a slave. If free, he said, he must work for his food while he was young, and when he should be old ; whereas if he remained a slave, his master would give him food for his labour while young, and let him eat, in rest, when he grew old. Also if sick his master would let him have provisions, and find him a doctor—but were he free, he could not work for food when old, or sick ; nor could he have a doctor, because he should be unable to pay him. This country, he said, was good for him, he was born in it, and he would not like to go into any other. If he should have "*the misfortune*" to be made free, he would learn some trade,

and work at that to procure him food and clothing.

He had acquired some idea of a future state, and described it as a great and general principle among the negroes, to cherish any of their own colour who had grown old, and were in want, and to feed and compassionate them, if they were free, and unable to work ; for which he observed they should “ go to heaven.” He had no doubt of being taken to heaven himself, and told me that he was ready to die that minute if any one would kill him, adding that he would rather die than live ! On being asked why he did not kill himself, he replied—“ *dat no good, if I fall do dat, me go to hell.*”—Lying, swearing, and drunkenness, he did not regard as crimes : suicide, and giving poison to any person were, in his estimation, the greatest, and almost the only sins. These he considered as certain of preventing any one from being received into heaven, of which his ideas were extremely vague, and unintelligible. Hell he described as an immense cauldron of liquid fire, into which the wicked were to be plunged.

It occurs to me that you may, probably, have heard it questioned whether a person can be attacked with the yellow fever more than once; therefore, amidst my unconnected notes, I may observe to you, that to the mortification of those who have already suffered it, as well as to others, we know that it may and does attack the same person, not only a second time, but many times *. An instance of this I may mention to you, together with a genuine Iricism produced on the subject, by one of the gentlemen of the hospital department, whose home lies a little to the west of Holyhead.

The patient was the sergeant-major of the rangers, a man who, from the nature of his appointment, was necessarily exposed to much duty, and great fatigue. He had twice been a patient at the hospital in yellow fever, and had both times recovered, after being in a state nearly to be despaired of. On his re-

Some medical men contend that fevers which, are communicated by contagion, cannot attack the same person twice. If there be any foundation for the opinion, it may stand as an additional proof that the yellow fever is not a contagious disease.

turning to us a third time, we were lamenting the severity of his sufferings, and the hard trials he had to encounter, when one of the hospital mates exclaimed—"Faith, and it's no wonder he should be attacked so often, for he is constantly exposed to the heat of the sun, *night and day*."

Sometimes, without any feelings of actual disease, the eyes and skin of those who, from their employment, are exposed to the greatest degrees of heat, become as yellow as in the deepest yellow fever. This happens to bakers, cooks, blacksmiths, and the like. A few days ago, in one of my walks, I met a man who had, some time before, been a patient in the hospital, and observing that his skin and eyes were of a strong yellow colour, I asked him if he was again ill; when he replied in the negative, adding that, on the contrary, he continued so well as to be employed *as a baker*, at the commissary's, and further remarking that he had himself noticed the yellowness, which he had been told was owing to the heat of his business.

Notwithstanding the severity of disease

among those who are recently arrived in the West Indies, we remark that the creoles, or creolised, are generally much greater invalids, than those who are but lately from Europe. This fact we see particularly exemplified in the corps of South American rangers,—the officers of which have been appointed, some from the regiments newly arrived from England, and the others from among the colonists; and while the latter are feeble and ailing, and often unfit for duty, the former are active and robust, far less complaining, and seldom indisposed, except when attacked with violent and dangerous disease. The creolised have a degree of languor and lassitude about them, and are subject to head-ach, and febrile sensations, which render them inactive, and less capable of exertion than the others: they are also very subject to fever of a remittent, or intermittent type, which either invades them at irregular periods, or returns in severe annual visitation.

In my medley of communication I must not neglect to tell you of a coincidence of

circumstances which occurred, a few days since, and filled my mind with pleasurable ideas. In a moment of relaxation, at the close of a pleasant and serene evening, I chanced to take up a copy of Thomson's Seasons to peruse ; and as I was pondering in deep meditation over his beautiful Autumn, lost in the delightful description of a tranquil and philosophic country life, which he so enchantingly contrasts with all the gay follies of fashion, the riches of commerce, and the loud and splendid *glitter* of war, I was suddenly roused by the sound of martial music, and the appearance of a body of troops marching by my window ; when, with the book in my hand, the troops in my eye, and the drum in my ear, contending sensations rushed into my mind ; and, delighted as I had felt with the description of serene happiness in a country life, the music and the splendour of Mars scattered doubts amidst my all-assenting admiration ; and, without knowing how to decide between the poet and the god of arms, I wished for Thomson's powers to describe the exquisite sensations which this accidental combination wrought in my breast. I looked

at the soldiers—read the book—listened to the music—reflected ! The troops advanced—the music died upon my ear—my eye was fixed on vacancy : I reasoned—compared—was absorbed ! and Thomson fell from my hand !

LETTER XXI.

Fatal effects of misconduct under prosperity. Example of gratitude in a Negro. High price of wages. Improved weather and roads. Temperature. Matin feelings. Scarcity of water. An example of the effect of climate upon Europeans. News received of an attempt of the French to invade Ireland.

Demarara, February.

As a contrast to the feelings, which I told you in my last letter had crowded upon me in consequence of an accidental coincidence of circumstances, I may now mention to you another occurrence which has forced upon my mind ideas of an opposite nature—of a nature both painful and humiliating.

Among those who were appointed to the rangers, without having previously been employed in the army, was a person in the medical department, and who, poor man, is now falling a victim to his good fortune. I was required, a few days since, to visit him in sickness, and found him lying in a most deplorable state of wretchedness—exhibiting a striking example

of the sad effects of sudden elevation. He had come an adventurer to this coast only in January, not three months previous to our invasion of the colonies. His education had not been highly liberal, nor had he address or talents to recommend him. A letter of introduction was all his fortune, and all his hope. By means of this he obtained the suffrage of two or three gentlemen of the colony, who introduced him to a professional employment, which, though not splendid, was, under the circumstances of his situation, ample beyond all that he could have expected. Soon afterwards, when the corps of South American rangers was formed, the same interest procured him an appointment, which, together with the employment already mentioned, produced him an additional income of nearly 500*l.* per annum. This exceeded all his calculations, and from prosperity seating herself in his lap so soon after his arrival, the sudden change overpowered his feeble mind, and instead of operating to his benefit, it is very rapidly hastening his destruction. His prudence did not keep pace with his fortune, but, overwhelmed with unexpected success, he grew presumptuous, and

assumed a vain importance, forgetting equally the duties of gratitude, and the circumstances of his situation. His manners being uncultivated, his conduct was abrupt and vulgar, and he rendered himself, not only generally unpleasant, but offensive to his friends, and altogether insupportable in the regiment. Having, in consequence, fallen into disgrace with those about him, he gave way to sottish habits, and from indulging too freely in rum, has injured his health past recovery ; and he now lies a melancholy picture of disease and misery. I found him in bed, ill with dysentery, intoxicated, sadly filthy, and emitting a strong odour of rum, with other offensive effluvia. A more wretched object my eyes scarcely ever beheld. He looked meager and worn down with disease and inebriety : his head and hands trembled from the effects of spirituous liquors : his countenance was pale and ghastly : his eyes dull and vacant ; and his speech faltering. His hair stood on end : a beard a fortnight long covered his chin : his skin was deep in dirt ; and his body was wrapped in an old ragged night gown, which had been long a stranger to the wash-tub. The curtains, sheets, and bedding, were old

and ragged, of unwholesome smell, and almost infectious with dirt. The sacking bottom was also ancient and rotten, and so loose as to sink, in the middle, down to the dirty floor. Old coffers and chests, cobwebs, dirty gallipots and bottles, were the furniture of the apartment: which was a close small room that did not appear to have known the luxury of cold water for many years. A meager slave was his attendant, whose chief duty it was to hand him the poisonous rum, whenever he was sober enough to call for—“*another glass!*” My professional occupation had often placed before me scenes of poverty and distress—objects of misery and disease were, indeed! but too familiar to me, yet can I never forget the shock I experienced, when, upon entering his chamber, this sinking object, and the crowded wretchedness around him, first met my eye.

Tell me, my friend, what strange error, what infatuation is it that causes men thus to pervert the good things of life? What folly—what delusive mania can it be that leads them to forfeit the comforts they might command, and involve themselves in the very depths of misery and of woe?

Although it is commonly remarked that gratitude is not a prominent virtue among the slaves, I may mention to you an additional fact, in proof that they are not destitute of this amiable quality. On the morning of January 13th, a well-looking robust negro, unexpectedly presented himself at my door, tendering his services, and begging that he might be allowed to work for me. Upon my going out to speak with him, his countenance gladdened with joy, and looking animated and cheerful, he said he would “*do ebery ting to ’blige Massa, wait upon Massa, clean Massu’s horse, and do all de work Massa tell him.*”

Not immediately recollecting his features, I asked him who he was, whence he came, and how it happened that he addressed himself to me? When he replied—“*Ab Massa, if you no remember Prince, Prince no forget dat Massa tell ’em soldiers for break one great iron collar off Prince’s neck, and give him for gnyaam when Massa at Mabaica!*” This brought him to my recollection, and I recognised an unhappy slave, whom, in one of my walks at Mahaica, I had met wandering in a cotton field, bearing a heavy iron collar upon his

neck, with three long iron spikes projecting from it, terminating in sharp points, at the distance of nearly a foot and a half from his person ; and with his body flogged into deep ulcers, from his loins to his hams. In this state, and almost starving with hunger, he appealed to my feelings. *Humanity* pleaded in his behalf, and without a too scrupulous inquiry into the whys and wherefores of the punishment, its tender dictates were obeyed. The poor man followed me to the fort : the soldiers grew indignant on seeing his naked sores ; and the impulse of their feelings not being opposed, his neck was quickly freed from its load, and the massive yoke and its spikes were as speedily converted into pot-hooks for the benefit of the mess. Thus made happy, the thankful slave had now found his way to my home at La Bourgade, in order to make his further acknowledgments, and to tender me his services. Shall it be said that Africans know not the divine sentiment of gratitude !

I before mentioned to you the great difficulty we meet with in obtaining labouring mechanics, and you will be surprized to know

the extravagant price at which they are paid in these colonies. Inconvenience sometimes arises from the scarcity of workmen, and the few, whom we have among us, being sensible that their number is small, and that others cannot be procured, demand most exorbitant wages, and commit their extortions without any sort of reserve. Only a few days ago the labouring carpenters threw down their tools, and refused to work, because a board, appointed to regulate the price of wages, refused to allow them *four dollars* per day, instead of three, at which extravagant rate they have been paid for some time past.

The weather, upon this coast, is now pleasant, and the roads delightfully good. We are advancing gradually into the dry season. Occasional showers still refresh the fields, but our deep and muddy roads are become quite smooth and dry, and are at this time, perhaps, as fine for travelling as any that can be found upon the face of the globe. The kindly breeze is steady and powerful, and the thermometer, at noon, seldom exceeds 82°; a degree of heat that we are able to support, without feeling those heavy sensations of

languor and weariness, which are found so extremely oppressive in the sultry days of an English summer.

Another very great comfort, not peculiar to this season, but which we commonly experience in this climate, is the total freedom from that lassitude and yawning, so common in England, at the hour of rising in the morning, and which is not only troublesome and unpleasant, but frequently causes us to steal another hour from the already too shortened day. Here, it is but one thing to awake, and to get up. The instant your eyes are open, the slumbers of the night are wholly past, and you have no feelings of heaviness or drowsy languor to oppose your rising; but in wakeful sprightliness you, at once, quit the pillow, and are ready to engage in the active pursuits of the day.

The decline of the wet season, although pregnant with manifold advantages, has brought us acquainted with a new trouble in the scarcity of water. In consequence of the increased number of persons requiring to be supplied, the tanks, or cisterns built for the

preservation of rain water, are found very inadequate to the consumption—and these being emptied very soon after the heavy rains had ceased, we have now, for our supply of fresh water, to depend upon the unwilling toil of a party of negroes, who are employed to go many leagues up the river in boats, in order to bring down casks of water, from a distance beyond the influence of the tides. In consequence of the several interruptions necessarily arising from this mode of procuring it, our supply of fresh water is not, at all times, so regular as might be wished, and there have been moments when we could have almost lamented the absence of heavy rains. Not only on account of sickness, but from the necessity we are under of using a considerable proportion of salted provisions, an ample supply of fresh water is rendered indispensable at the hospital. Fresh animal food is again become a great dainty among us, and both the sick, and their attendants are often compelled to satisfy themselves with a diet of salt meat, and the vegetables of the country.

Letters have lately reached us from Barbadoes, in which is mentioned a striking ex-

ample of the fatal influence of climate upon newly arrived Europeans. One of the regiments, which left that island upon the expedition to St. Lucie, in the month of April last, is already returned, a mere skeleton, consisting of only a small body of invalids—and the proportion which fell in battle is said to be very trifling, compared with the greater destruction caused by a foe, whose hungry ravages are far more direful than those of Grim-visaged war.

We have likewise received some recent English papers, from which we learn that the French have attempted the invasion of Ireland with only a few hundreds of men. Tell me if this be true—and if, as reported, the winds and the waves of our coast have frustrated the attempt, and spared our troops the necessity of punishing this act of temerity, and Gallic presumption?

LETTER XXII.

Author accompanies a party upon an interesting excursion up the river Demarara. Different in some respects from his former excursion up the river Berbische. Singular fortune of the author in happening to be of both parties. Objects of the excursion. Author only a favored appendage. Date of departure and return. Present party only preceded by individuals. Remarks concerning the distance. Author unwell—recovers en route. Plantation, “Golden Tent.” First night passed with Mr. Selles at the estate “Hermitage.” Islands in the river Demarara. Kamonuy creek. Party dine in the boat. Woratilla creek. Mabeira creek. A wide savanna. View of Mr. Edmonstone’s dwelling. Dark windings of the creek. An accident happens to one of the slaves. His reply respecting the depth of the water. The party arrive at Mr. Edmonstone’s in the dark. Novelty of feeling themselves walking upon rising ground. Hospitable reception by Mr. Edmonstone. Plenteous supper. Night accommodation.

Demarara, March 9.

YOU will regard it as an additional smile bestowed upon me by fortune, when I tell you that I have been invited to another river excursion, and again had an opportunity of becoming a traveller in the wild woods, and uncultivated regions of this coast; and that I

learn, from those who have the best means of knowing the fact, that few or none of the inhabitants, however long their residence here, have journeyed so far up the rivers, and into the dark forests, both of Demarara and Berbische, as myself.

My late excursion differed in some of its features from the former. It was made with different persons, and fitted out with more of accommodation and comfort; but the other, as made with my comrades, was more completely a marooning party, and perhaps exhibited, in stronger traits, the characters and circumstances which presented themselves to our observation.

In our expedition up the river Berbische, we were all strangers, trespassing upon the bounty of those we met; and, without any acquaintance or introduction, depending upon the hospitality of persons wholly unknown to us, for the means of prosecuting our journey: whilst in the excursion up the river Demarara, all of the party, except myself, were colonists, who were accustomed to the country, acquainted with places and persons, and provided

with stores, and other accommodations for the occasion.

Our reception by the planters upon the borders of the rivers was, in both cases, so liberal, that it were difficult to mark the distinction—perhaps I might say that in the one instance we were cordially hailed as expected friends—in the other generously greeted as welcome strangers. That it should have fallen to my lot to have been of both parties, is matter of singular gratification to me ; for they were not merely journies of idle curiosity : a strong interest attached to them, both regarding our species, and the face of the globe we inhabit ; and the impression they have made upon my mind will be remembered with pleasure, to the end of my days ; for I always contemplate whatever concerns the habits and welfare of my fellow beings with feelings of very sincere *fraternity*, and nothing so delights me, as to witness the actual condition of man ;—whether he inhabit the pompous city, the unambitious village, the bleak mountain, or the wild and deep-shaded forest.

The leading objects of our excursion

were to procure some roots of plants and trees, principally of the wild fruits, of the forest, for the purpose of planting upon the estates of my fellow travellers near the coast; and to explore the river, as far as the falls, which is the utmost extent we could reach in a boat.

I was only an appendage—a mere stranger of the party, and had no care nor concern regarding the arrangements of the journey. Every thing was planned and provided by my companions, and I was invited to join them, only from the very liberal sentiment that the excursion might afford me pleasure. The party, to whom I am indebted for so handsome a compliment, consisted of Mr. M'Kenzie, Mr. Frazer, Mr. L. Cuming, and Mynheer Heyliger.

We loitered on the way, like well-accommodated travellers, and made it a tour of eleven days, having taken our departure from Stabroek, at noon on the 25th of February, and returned on the evening of the 7th of March. No party, equally numerous, had been known to travel to so great a dis-

tance from the coast, although individuals had, occasionally, journied as far as, or even beyond the falls of the river.

We had no means of marking the distance, except by the Dutch method of making it synonymous with time: according to which, I might say that from Stabroek to the Falls is thirty-six *hours*; or, from the mouth of the river, to the part where it ceases to be navigable, nearly thirty-six hours and a half. But in this I cannot profess even an approach to the correctness of Dutch measurement, which gives, with tolerable accuracy, four miles to the hour; for although we were thirty-six hours upon the water, between the town and the falls, I dare not venture to calculate the distance at four times thirty-six miles; as the hour might be sometimes eight or ten miles, and sometimes not a third so many, according as the breeze, the tide, or the current, chanced to aid or impede our progress; or, according to the feelings of strength, or fatigue, on the part of the slaves. And, indeed, if I should fix the average at four miles an hour, according to the Dutch calculation, the distance, thus given, would still be very incorrect, as we were pre-

vented from pursuing the direct course of the river, by our frequent calls at the different plantations *en route*.

During the morning, previous to our departure, I had felt very unwell, with strong symptoms of fever, which being increased by heat, and the hurry of preparation, I was so ill at the time of going into the boat, that nothing but the most ardent desire not to forego the excursion could have induced me to have ventured from home; and, indeed, I have since felt more sensible, than I did at the moment, how extremely perilous it was to embark upon such an excursion, in this climate, under the troubled sensations I then experienced; but at that instant, nothing short of actual confinement could have detained me behind. Happily the threatening indications subsided, and, recovering as we proceeded, I became quite well upon the journey.

We made our first call at an estate named "Golden Tent," belonging to Mynheer Meertens, where we were received in a very friendly manner, by Mr. Reid, the resident manager, who keeps the house and premises in

such high order and preservation, that the general neatness of the home, together with the square grass-plats before the door, and other decorations around the building, give it more the air of an European dwelling, than any place I had seen in the colonies.

We reached a plantation called Hermitage in time for dinner, and there took up our abode for the night, being most liberally welcomed by Mr. Selles, who, with great hospitality, devoted the many good things of his house and table to our accommodation.

During the next day's journey we passed several islands, lying in the course of the river, but from being flat and covered with wood, they offered nothing more novel or interesting, than the mere break they occasioned in the naked view of the river. The first, is called the land of Canaan : the second, Fort Island, being the spot where a fort was originally erected, and a military post established for the defence of the colony ; which was then settled higher up the river, than it is at present : the next is simply named

the third island. At the entrance of a creek called Kamonuy, we found a fourth, which was the last we met with in the course of the river. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when we reached the Kamonuy creek; upon entering which we found a striking change of scenery. Instead of moving upon a bold and spacious river, beset with islands, we were now conducted into a confined channel of deep black water, leading into the sombre gloom of the forest, and overhung with trees, whose dark foliage, meeting from the opposite banks, formed an umbrageous canopy, which, even at mid-day, enveloped us, as it were, in the still shades of night.

Having yet a great distance to make before we could arrive at our next place of rest, and fearing lest, as the evening advanced, we might mistake any of the turnings of our channel, and be led into the uninhabited depths of the forest, we took our dinners in the creek; without stopping the boat, and, in order to avoid every delay, rested the negroes only by turns, while we supplied them with the necessary support of their toil.

This dark and narrow river was beset with many broken stumps of trees, which endangered the bottom of our boat; but we escaped with only slightly rubbing against some of them as we passed.

From the Kamonuy we were led into the Woratilla creek, which was still narrower and darker than the former; and out of the Woratilla, we turned into another creek, called Ma-beira, which was so narrow as totally to prevent the negroes from rowing: they were, therefore, obliged to stand up in the boat, and push it on by resting with the ends of their oars against the banks at the sides. Soon after entering the third creek we were conducted into a wide and open savanna, at the remotest end of which we could just discern the lonely home of Mr. Edmonstone, whither we were bound, and whither it seemed me might quickly arrive. A small cannon was accordingly fired from the boat to announce our approach. But before we came near to the house, the windings of the creek took us back into the deep shades; and after proceeding in the dark for some time, we again opened into the savanna, and were as before deluded

by a seemingly rapid approach to the house— but again, and again, the numerous windings of the channel led us back into the dark bosom of the forest.

It was fortunate that we had reached the entrance of this very narrow stream before the night set in, or we might have passed the turning, and have been led into the deep woods, widely astray from our path ; for during the time of our slow moving along the Mabeira creek, we were overtaken by the most profound and impenetrable darkness ; in the midst of which an accident occurred, that might have proved fatal to one of our slaves, who from not being able to see the bank, mis-
 sed the land with his oar, and fell overboard into the water. Happily, from the habits of the negroes, they are in a manner amphibious, and this man had no sooner reached the bottom, than he rose again to the surface, and swimming after us, quickly climbed into the boat ; when, on being asked if the water was deep, he replied in the true negro dialect,—“ *Deep like a bell Massa !*” then shaking his skin, resumed his toil as if nothing had happened.

Before we had well recovered from the hurry of this accident, we were again brought into the savanna, when we perceived the lights of the house to be very near to us. The cup was now at our lips, but we were still to be tantalized, and were again carried into the heavy gloom of the woods, where we continued to pursue the tedious windings of the creek, until the open savanna had grown nearly as dark as the close shades of the forest, and we could scarcely perceive Mr. Edmonstone, when he at length hailed us, at the front of his dwelling.

Our journey had not been enlivened with much of variety, even in the course of the river; and from the time of our entering the creeks, we were shut in sombre solitude. In the forest a death-like stillness prevailed. The scene was cheerless as limited: o'ercast with solemn darkness, the woods seemed uninhabited, and scarcely did a bird or an insect chirp a note to disturb the silent shades.

From the landing place up to the house we ascended by a rising path, which our feet distinguished as a great novelty, after so long

treading a flat soil interrupted only by dykes and ditches. A short time after our arrival the table was spread with ham, pepper pot, laba, and other good things, of which our party partook with travellers' appetite. Soon afterwards we retired to rest, the other gentlemen in their hammocks,—myself upon a bed.

The party pass the night at Mr. Edmonstone's—undisturbed by musquitoes. Expedition into the woods. Novel scenery. Trees of the forest lofty—their wood of hard and solid texture. Decayed trees not seen in the forest. Specimens collected. Few animals seen in the woods—fewer insects. Author strolls into an Indian hut. Returns to revisit its inhabitants. Finds that they have decamped into the woods. Temperature of the air in the forest :—of the water in the creek : of the atmosphere in the shade of the house. Eccentric personage residing at Mr. Edmonstone's. Boat sent round to the Sand-hill. Another boat dispatched down the river. The party journey on foot through the woods to the Sand-hill. Scenes of the forest. Intricate path traced through the thick woods by an old negro. Sudden opening upon a wide plain. Scenery at the Sand-hill. Situation of the dwelling. An inhospitable home. Suggestion that the owner may be influenced by the chilling atmosphere of the spot. Temperature at the Sand-hill. The party detained at this unwelcome abode. They quit it without a regret.

March.

AT Mr. Edmonstone's tranquil and solitary home, we passed the hours of rest in sound repose, undisturbed by the tormenting musquitoes, which we had found excessively annoying at the Hermitage the night before.

In the morning Mr. Edmonstone placed himself at the head of our corps, and, attended by four or five negroes, together with a sagacious old Indian, we set out upon an expedition into the woods, in search of the plants and scions, which had formed the leading object of our journey. Some heavy showers having fallen in the night, we found it unpleasant walking ; but we persevered in our pursuit, and toiled far into the woods, remaining upon our legs from nine o'clock in the morning until two in the afternoon, and, to my surprise, without experiencing any feelings of fatigue. An ample collection of rare specimens of plants and fruits was the reward of our labour ; and we had the further gratification of witnessing, in the course of our walk, a variety of scenery, which cannot be met with in the flat and more cultivated parts of the colony. We traversed thick and wild forests, crossed rivulets and limpid streams, climbed up rude hills, and descended into deep gullies ; which created a novelty that animated our attention, and banished all sense of fatigue.

For the most part, our road was only a

narrow path cut by the Bucks, and so closely bordered, as to confine us in our walk, to the Indian file. At times the forest was thinner, and we could see to a distance betwixt its shades, or walk two or three abreast, under the trees at the sides of our path. Twice only we came to open spots, which had more the appearance of plains than of thickets, and were mere patches of arid and sandy soil, which refused every thing of nourishment to the vegetable world. All the other parts were more or less covered with shrubs and forest trees, the latter of which are of immense height and bulk. They are usually perpendicular in their growth, and their wood is heavy, and of uncommonly hard texture, approaching, in some instances, to the solidity, weight, and even the sound of metallic substances.

It occurred to me as remarkable, that in this long walk through the woods, we saw no decayed remains of trees, either standing like the hollow shells we often see in England, or lying upon the ground, sunk with decrepitude. Neither did we meet with prostrate trunks, which had been broken down, or up-

rooted by the winds. All appeared in the fullness of health and vigour, as if their erect and stately pillars had, through many ages, been growing side by side, and were never to surrender to all-destructive years. Most of them were without branches, except near to their summits, where their thick foliage commonly forms a canopy which is not easily penetrated by the sun or the rain.

Among a variety of specimens, we collected some fine plants of the tonquin bean, the Souwarrow nut, the wild orange, and a species of the medlar. Of birds and animals the woods appeared to contain but few. Two wild hogs, some parrots, and parroquets formed nearly the whole list of all we saw—nor did the forest seem to abound with insects, for scarcely had I passed a day, since my arrival upon the coast of Guiana, so entirely free from the annoyance of these minor objects of creation. Two or three musquitoes, of feeble growth and feeble wing, were all we saw in the woods; and at Mr. Edmonstone's not one appeared.

After our return from the forest, we par-

took of a most plentiful dinner, and in the evening strolled about the environs, either separately, or in divided parties, according to our several inclinations. In this ramble it happened that I trod my way into an Indian hut, where I found the family, consisting of a man, two women, and three children, employed preparing their pepper pot and cassada for supper.

The next morning I rose at an early hour, and returned to repeat my visit to this group of Indians; when lo! I found only the empty hut! Probably they had, or had imagined a better reason for moving, than my disturbing them by an abrupt evening call; but, whatever had occasioned it, they had packed up the furniture and utensils of their humble abode, and taking all with them into their canoe, had decamped in the night, into the woods.

From the Indian hut I walked into the forest, and, having a small thermometer in my pocket, I suspended it, for some time, in the damp and heavy shade of the woods; when it fell to 72: I, then, immersed it in the open water of the creek, and it rose to 73½.

In the house it was at 73 ; at noon on the day preceding, the mercury was at 81.

Before I take you from the forest-embosomed abode of Mr. Edmonstone, I should tell you that in a small garret of this sequestered home is living a very extraordinary character, in the person of an old Scotsman, an antiquated and eccentric being of the school of Louthembourg ; and who is, here, regarded as a literary phænomenon—a *literal* one he certainly is ! He had formerly known better days ; but having been reduced to poverty, he is become an exile from his country, and, in this profound seclusion, passes his declining days in the dull and harmless round of reading an old Hebrew bible, and two or three worm-eaten volumes of Greek and Latin. His person is plain—his figure meager, and his visage pallid. In manner, he is formal and pedantic. His wardrobe and furniture vie with the antiquity of his library, and both apparel and apartment well accord with his limited occupation. His wants being few and easily supplied, he lives contented and happy. We found him teaching Mr. Edmonstone's children to read ; and this we understood to

be a duty of relaxation—a kind of remission from his converse with the musty old volumes, in the perusal and re-perusal of which he finds the solace of his cares, and the gratification of all his remaining ambition.

We loitered away the forenoon at Mr. Edmonstone's, sending our boat round by way of the creeks, and the river, to meet us at an estate called Sand-hill, in the evening. We likewise dispatched a smaller boat down the river, with the specimens of plants, roots, and cuttings we had collected in the woods; and, after making an early dinner with Mr. Edmonstone, he very kindly took us on, in his large canoe, to prosecute our journey. We returned down the Mabeira creek; but, instead of going north, when we opened into the Waratilla to proceed to the Kamonuy creek, and the river, we took the opposite course in order to penetrate deeper into the woods; and, when we had paddled, to a short distance, up the Southern channel of the Waratilla creek, we were set on shore upon its eastern bank, and from thence took our route, on foot, through the forest to the Sand-hill.

This was a walk of two hours over rude hills, across deep gullies, and through woods, which to an European eye seemed impenetrable. The forest lies, as it were in waves of alternate ridges and vallies, and is so thickly beset with trees, that a person unaccustomed to such travelling could have no hope of making his way through it. At best our path was only that of the Bucks, which compelled us to follow each other in the unsocial Indian file, and, at several times, even this was not discernable *to us* : but an experienced old *negro*, whom Mr. Edmonstone had selected as our guide and conductor, seemed to know every tree and twig we had to pass ; and directed our steps, with as much accuracy, as if a broad turnpike-road had been all the way before him ; although it often happened that we had to form a path by pulling away the branches and brambles with our hands.

A short time previous to our arrival at the Sand-hill, we suddenly escaped out of the deep shades of the forest, and one of the most varied and beautiful scenes, which can be found in the colony, unexpectedly opened be-

fore us. Suppose yourself in a country where flat waters, and heavy woods form one continued and unbroken sameness, and imagine that after a walk of two hours, through the obscurity of almost impenetrable forests, you, unexpectedly, rush forth upon an extensive plain, where the eye immediately fixes upon a handsome house, together with a bold arch of a large river, winding its course, at a great depth below you, and the view extending far over the woods of its opposite bank, and you will have a tolerably accurate picture of the scene which, suddenly, presented itself before us, at the Sand-hill. It was highly novel, being more open, varied, and extended than at any other inhabited spot of these boundless forests. Need I add, that it was highly enlivened and improved by our observing a white female standing at the door of the house, whose flowing robes vied with the fairness of her form and person. This lady proved to be the niece of the lord of the mansion.

Correctly speaking, the land, which appeared to us as a plain, was a mountain of sand, whose flat surface was elevated at least

a hundred feet above the river, and overhung the water in a bold precipice ; but the opposite shore was low and flat, being scarcely raised above the level of the river, which caused the uninterrupted summit of its thick woods to appear before us like a green field, or a wide park of unlimited extent.

We advanced to the house, quite enraptured with its commanding situation : but,—shall I tell you !—that it was the abode of inhospitality !—shall I say that this house, “erected on the rising ground,” was, perhaps, the only one in the colony, where a stranger would have found an *unwelcome home* ! We were greeted with a forbidding coldness—a freezing formality ; and were entertained with a miserable penury, of which I had not believed the coast of Guiana could furnish an example ; and I feel penetrated with grief and disappointment in marking the Sand-hill as an exception to the general hospitality, which I had found, so eminently, to prevail in these colonies.

I will not attempt to decide in how far the conduct of the lord of this domain might

be influenced by climate, but there was much of semblance between the coldness of his manner, and the chilling air of his place of residence ; for, on our entering upon the plain of the Sand-hill, when we came out of the forest, we had all felt shivering with cold, and were glad to put on our coats, which we had dispensed with in our walk through the woods. Between five and six o'clock the next morning I found the thermometer at 67. and at noon it only rose to 80°.

It consisted with the tides of the river, and with our convenience, in waiting the leisure of Mr. Edmonstone, to make this reluctant home our resting place for the night, and until the afternoon of the following day ; but the ungracious reception we met with caused the hours to pass very heavily : as soon, therefore, as the tide served, and Mr. Edmonstone was ready to accompany us, we took our departure for the " Loo," quitting, without regret, the most delightful situation in the colony.

The party arrive at the Loo in the absence of the manager. Take possession of the house, and seat themselves at the supper table. Cordially welcomed on his return. Well accommodated for the night. Morning temperature. Party call at an estate to breakfast. An Adonis in the forest. A wood-cutter's cottage. Party entertained by a negro woman. Visit a free mulatto named John Hill. A specimen of negro labour. The party proceed to another wood cutter's dwelling to sleep. Scenery on the river improved. Night accommodations at this humble cottage. Scenery observed on the following day. The party make purchases from the Bucks. Visit different places en route. Hasmond, a Dutchman. Pezano, a Spaniard. The latter an eccentric character—a chief among the Bucks. Has a plurality of wives—the senior a sort of duenna. Pezano's employment.—His person. He consents to go to the Post-holder's and the Falls, as a guide, but waits to follow in state. Ooest Vriesland. Pezano's arrival at the Postholder's. Mrs. Mutz sick, and sent into the woods to the Bucks. Hospitality of Mr. Mutz. Shooting with the Indians. Bathing. Spring water. Accommodations for the night.

THE Loo is a plantation belonging to Mr. Haslin. The slaves were employed four hours in rowing to this estate from the Sandhill. At the time we arrived, the manager was from home; but, nevertheless, we took possession of the mansion, spread the cloth,

and, placing our ham and the other provisions of the boat upon table, without ceremony sat down to supper. On his return the manager unexpectedly found, in his chamber, a party of seven, seated round the social board; and of our suite were no less than fifteen slaves, making together a body of twenty-two persons, who with provisions, hammocks, and baggage, nearly filled the house so as to prevent its master from entering: but, like a true colonist of the country, and unlike the repulsive lord of the Sand-hill, this gentleman hailed us with cordial greetings, expressed himself happy to see the whole party, and even apologised for, what he was pleased to term, his misfortune, in not being at home to welcome our arrival. Immediately all the best things of the larder were added to our supper, and our bountiful host further entreated us to suspend our appetites, and allow him to dress fowls, eggs, and all he could prepare, to improve the meal. In short his whole conduct was precisely consistent with the prevailing urbanity of the colony, and in the generous attentions of the Loo we forgot the arid and inhospitable Sand-hill. The evening passed away very pleasantly, and

our hammocks were conveniently suspended for the night. Early in the morning we resumed our seats in the boat. Coffee was served to us at the time of rising, and we set off, without delay, to prosecute our journey to "the Falls."

The mercury in the thermometer was this morning at 72, being five degrees higher than at the same hour of the preceding day, at the more elevated situation of the Sand-hill.

After rowing for about three hours and a half up the river, we felt some calls of appetite, and finding ourselves near to a plantation, we, in the true spirit of marooning, went on shore to seek some breakfast. Our reception was hospitable, and we were welcomed with much civility by the manager, whom we found to be a *petit-maitre*, whose fondness for the decorations of his person was very conspicuous, and afforded us some diversion. An *Adonis* in the woods was a great novelty; and notwithstanding his politeness and liberality towards us, we could not but smile at the gaiety of his apparel, and particularly the depth of his frills and ruffles, which,

full flowing at his wrists and bosom, almost enveloped his meager person. Amidst the undressed Africans, and the still more naked Indians, about his home, he of course was unrivalled, and possessed the superlative gratification of standing alone—the *rara avis* of the forest.

But to the honor of this forest *beau*, his foibles in no degree interrupted his better feelings. He was correctly *au fait* with respect to the hospitable attentions due to strangers; and he entertained us with the utmost liberality. Nor did he confine himself barely to receiving and accommodating us with civility, but, further, expressed much regret that we were come for so short a visit, and urgently invited us to prolong our stay. At breakfast he provided us with a high feast, by giving us some hot rolls and fresh butter, together with a dish of fine oranges and other fruits.

After pursuing our journey about three hours further up the river, we came to the cottage of a wood-cutter, where we met with a very active and intelligent negro woman,

who welcomed us to her master's home, and, adding a laba pepper-pot to our boat provisions, quickly set before us a very neat and plentiful dinner.

We afterwards made a visit to a mulatto man named John Hill, an eccentric character, well known to the gentlemen of the colony : and who had here possessed himself of a small house, and was settled as a free inhabitant, living in a sort of independence upon the wood-cutter's estate.

In the course of our walk, I had the opportunity of observing a species of negro-labour that was new to me ; having met a party of sixteen naked slaves, male and female, in the act of dragging the trunk of an immense tree out of the forest, with ropes. They were conducted by a driver with his whip ; and pulled on the load by mere strength of arm, having no assistance from any machinery, and only availing themselves of the simple expedient of placing small billets of wood under the tree, at short distances from each other, in order to prevent it from sinking into the dirt, and doubling their toil.

Finding that it would be a long and fatiguing journey, to make the whole of the distance, from the wood-cutter's to Mr. Mutz's, the Postholders, on the morrow, and learning that there was a tolerable building on the way, where we might hang up our hammocks for the night, we rowed two or three hours further in the evening, borrowing an old negro woman to take with us for our guide, lest, in the approaching darkness, we might pass the hut without observing it.

The scenery now sensibly improved, as we advanced up the river. In the course of this day's journey we saw some lofty, irregular hills, which formed a very pleasing and picturesque variety, and relieved the dull uniformity of smooth water, and flat woods, so peculiar to this coast.

About eight o'clock we arrived at the dwelling, which had been pointed out to us as a convenient resting place for the night. Its exterior was not very prepossessing, and we found both house and accommodations the most comfortless of all that we met with in the course of our journey. The rooms were

small and confined, but neatness happened not to be a predominant passion of the possessor. We felt no inducement to banquet away the night, but took a glass of simple grog, and very soon after our arrival, retired supperless to our hammocks—some in a close unpleasant chamber—the others, like the Bucks, under an open hovel.

We rose with Phœbus, and, being glad to escape from the house, made the boat our dressing-room; then, according to the Dutch custom, defended our stomachs from the morning damp, by a cup of coffee, and, without further delay, put ourselves *en route* to Mr. Mutz's, the remotest European home of the colony.

In this part of our journey, the whole scenery became strikingly changed, and, after the insipid monotony of flat woods and water, the objects which now presented themselves were novel and varied; and all around us seemed calculated to excite a strong and peculiar interest. Many of the Indians were moving upon the river in their canoes; some alone,

some in families, and some in larger bodies : cottages and Indian huts occasionally opened to our view in the woods : high banks sometimes bordered the river ; and, not unfrequently hills and lofty summits crowned its shores.

From the Bucks, whom we met in their canoes, we purchased some parrots and Amazonian parroquets, called Keiz-keiz, together with some bows and arrows, war clubs, and various species of Indian implements, and household apparatus ; and feeling anxious not to pass, unnoticed, any thing that might afford us gratification, we went on shore to make *en passant* visitings at the several huts and cottages which caught our observation in the woods, or upon the banks of the river.

At one of these places of call we found residing a Dutchman named Hasmond, who had recently taken up his abode in this sequestered part of the colony. Upon our remarking that he had very much the air of an old soldier, we were informed that he had been many years in the army of the Prince of Orange, and having retired from the service,

had now built himself a small house, and settled here to seek his fortune, as a wood-cutter.

At another of the cottages we met with an old Spaniard, named Pezano, perhaps the most eccentric character, and the most remarkable personage of the colony. This man had formed to himself a little cottage-abode, and was living at his own secluded home in the woods, the friend and associate, and a kind of chief among the Bucks; and, although upwards of sixty years of age, he had made his selection from the wild forests, and had taken, unto himself, no less than four Indian wives; of whom some were handsome, and some youthful, the youngest being only eleven years old. Thus you find disparity of years, between man and wife, is not peculiar to polished circles, or opulent cities: neither is the spirit of intrigue, for *l'amour piquant* is also known in the woods; and old Pezano's wives are not said to rival Penelope in chastity.

I mentioned on a former occasion, that it is the Indian usage, for a man to take as many wives as he can maintain, and, the se-

nior being regarded as the duenna, is commonly appointed as a kind of spy upon the conduct of the others. Yet we heard that means were sometimes devised, not barely to veil her Argus eye, but even to convert her into the instrument, whereby to obtain favors from either of the younger ;—and so you will expect it might be in the house of Pezano.

This old Spaniard was originally from Oronoko : but he had passed twenty-eight years, as a manager upon the different estates in the colonies of Demarara and Essequibo ; and had now appropriated to himself this home amidst the great family of the woods ; where, from cultivating the friendship of the Bucks, he induces them to assist him in felling timber to sell to the colonists, by which means, together with the produce of his gun, and the planting of roots, and other culinary vegetables, about his dwelling, he procures a sufficiency of food for the support of himself and his wives.

Pezano is of the smaller order of men—of low stature, spare habit, and decrepit figure. In colour he is scarcely fairer than his Indian

fociates. His teeth are gone, and his nose and chin appear as if they had appointed a speedy meeting, for the affectionate purpose of embracing each other. Still he is lively and animated, and possesses great energy of mind, with far more of bodily activity, than his figure seems to indicate. Anticipating much of information and amusement from his conversation, we were desirous to have the old Spaniard as our guide, from the Post-holder's to the Falls, and therefore invited him to accompany us in the boat to Mr. Mutz's. He expressed a willingness to oblige us: but Pezano might not move in obscurity! He was here a king, and must proceed in state. He would, therefore, take his leisure, and, attended with his proper retinue, come at another hour. Having obtained his promise, we were satisfied, and, leaving to his choice the mode in which he should travel, we took our leave, and proceeded, without further delay, to Ooest Vriesland, the abode of the Post-holder, where we arrived about three o'clock in the afternoon.

This is the remotest home of the white people, the furthest from the coast and the sea, and the most distant habitation possessed by

Europeans, in the settlement. It forms the link of connection between the bay inhabitants of the woods, and the white inhabitants of the colony, being established by the latter as a post of communication for the purpose of administering friendly offices, and cultivating an amicable intercourse with the Indians.

Within a short time after we arrived, Pezano and his suite were descried, paddling up the river, in two loaded canoes. Upon their reaching the landing place, we discovered that the old Spaniard was attended by three of his wives; also by a party of the Bucks, under command of an old Indian, who was appointed their captain, and dressed out in a broad laced hat, carrying in his hand, as a further token of distinction, a tall silver-headed staff, with which he preceded his troop in all the stateliness of his office.

Next to king Pezano, the bearer of these insignia felt himself the mightiest prince of the forest, and affected an air of dignity, not less consequential, than is sometimes assumed by greater men, upon being invested with a wand. or a ribbon.

The house of the Post-holder is rather small, but arranged with much neatness. It is pleasantly situated upon an irregularly rising ground, and commands a fine arch of the river, which flows before it in a clear and limpid stream. We found it an interesting and agreeable resting place. The friendly door opened to us with a cheerful welcome. Our reception was strictly hospitable, and we were entertained with a liberality as unbounded, as it was unaffected.

From Mr. Mutz we learned that, by making a long day of the morrow, we might complete our journey to "the Falls," and return to his house in the evening. This was pleasant as unexpected intelligence; for beyond the Post-holder's lived neither European nor colonist: nor was there any place of call whatsoever. The wild forest was possessed only by its wild inhabitants, and for every accommodation, we must depend upon the limited resources of our boat. Relying therefore upon Mr. Mutz to make the necessary arrangements for the remainder of our voyage, we left it to him and Pezano, to plan our proceedings for the following day.

The Post-holder is married to a Dutch-woman, but we had not the pleasure of this lady's society. She was in ill health, and had been sent into the woods, to the Bucks to be cured. Our visit was too short to afford me an opportunity of obtaining any accurate information regarding the nature of her malady, or of the remedies used by the Indians for her relief: but I procured a few specimens of gums, and nuts, employed by these inhabitants of the forest, in their practice of medicine.

Mr. Mutz pleaded the absence of his lady in excuse for treating us with, what he was pleased to term, "such homely fare." But we could discover no cause of apology whatever, for a general neatness prevailed, and in this non-marketing solitude, an ample plenty spread the board, the table being covered with an excellent pepper-pot, an omelette, some fine pork, a large ham, and some rice.

We had also a great luxury in some pure spring water, as clear as crystal. I need not tell you how much more highly this was

prized, than if it had been the finest wine. It was the first I had tasted in the colony—and was indeed a high treat to me; although I yet continue to drink some wine, as a convalescent, and I may take this occasion to caution you against surprise, if, upon my return to England, you should find that, in this respect, I still feel myself *not quite recovered!*

Whilst the dinner was preparing, we amused ourselves, in company with Pezano and a party of Indians, shooting with the bow and arrow. The afternoon passed very delightfully, in hearing the conversation and interesting remarks of the Post-holder, and the old Spaniard. In the evening, we again strung the bow, and some of us also enjoyed the high luxury of bathing in the very inviting and pellucid stream of the river.

About 9 o'clock we went to our hammocks—some in chambers, some in the passages, and some under the house, which was built upon pillars, a considerable height from the ground. It will be seen from this, how little difficulty occurs in the nocturnal accommodation of large parties of friends or strangers,

in a warm climate. Neither extensive buildings, nor a number of rooms, nor even beds, paillasse, nor mattresses are required. A few cleets, or iron hooks, fastened up in different parts of the house, for the support of hammocks, are all that necessity demands. From this facility of arrangement for the night, the ceremony of invitation is not always held requisite, and it is often seen that marooning parties, consisting of no inconsiderable numbers, make their visitations unexpectedly, yet find convenient accommodation, even in the smallest houses, and the most retired situations.

Journey from Ooest Vriesland to "the Falls." The party meet with Mrs. Mutz, at an Indian dwelling in the woods. Some hills and a rock at the side of the river. The Falls a shallow irregular current. The party dine in the boat at the Falls. They leave their names, and the date of their visit in a bottle.—Joy of the negroes on turning the head of the boat. Their surprise concerning the object of the expedition. A hill 200 feet high. Appearance of the forest upon this elevated land. Peculiar growth of the trees. A pleasant evening at the Post-holder's. Temperature of Ooest Vriesland. The party take their departure for the Loo:—dine at a wood-cutter's:—entertained by a negro woman, and a mulatto man. A severe day for the slaves. The boat overtaken by a canoe dispatched with a friendly invitation. The party proceed to the Loo by the still light of the moon:—arrive in the night. Find the family in bed. Morning temperature at the Loo. Unusual feelings from cold. Journey from the Loo to Garden Eden. Another hard day for the slaves. The party pass the inhospitable Sand-hill, and dine in the boat. Successful expedient of employing the cockswain to encourage the negroes. Magic effect of an extempore song.

March.

THE next morning we rose at three o'clock to prepare for our last day's journey up the river. At a little before five we went into the boat, accompanied by Pezano, and attended by a sage old Indian in his canoe

We were six hours and a half rowing to the falls. On the way we saw, within the woods at the sides of the river, several houses of the Indians, some of which we visited;—but we met fewer of the Bucks moving in their canoes, than we had seen the preceding day. In one of the houses we found Mrs. Mutz, the wife of the Post-holder, lying in a hammock suspended over a fire, according to the Indian mode of sleeping.

This part of the country was diversified with hills; some of which were more lofty than any we had passed in the course of the river, and at one spot we observed, for the first time upon the coast of Guiana, a naked rock of stone, hanging in huge form, over the edge of the river; and it being the first mass of the kind, perhaps I might say the first stone that I had seen in the colony, I broke off a piece to preserve as a specimen of the mineralogy of the country.

At half past eleven o'clock, we arrived at what are called *the falls*—a term which had conveyed to my expectation the idea of a cascade, perhaps something like the falls of Schaff-

hausen, or the great body of the river pouring down from a vast height in one immense column, forming an example of very grand, or highly picturesque scenery : but you will judge of my disappointment, when you are informed that instead of a second Niagara, these falls were merely the shallow water, gently rippling in broken stream, over some irregular rocks of whinstone, which here crossed the river from side to side, and that they more resembled the running of an ordinary brook, than the rushing torrent of a loud-roaring cascade. Nothing could be more tame and unimpressive. We were able to row in the boat up to the very rocks, and even in the middle of the river, to step upon them, without wetting our shoe-tops in the current that was passing over them. In no part were the falls two feet in height. The Indians are in the habit of carrying their canoes over them, and proceeding uninterrupted, in their journeying up the river—or in the rainy season, when the stream is more rapid, they make a path in the bordering woods, and carry their canoes through the forest, until they have passed the falls, and then resume their voyage upon the water.

After inspecting all that we wished to see, and breaking off some specimens of the whinstone rock which caused the falls, we took our dinners in the boat, and concluded our expedition up the river by marking its date, together with each of our names, upon a piece of paper, which we inclosed in a glass bottle, and having corked it securely, left it fastened up in one of the trees.

I wish it were possible to convey to you a just idea of the joy and happiness expressed by the negroes, upon putting about the boat to return. From rowing a heavy load always against the stream, and sometimes against the tide, together with feeling no interest in the voyage, nor in any way comprehending the object of it, the journey, to them, had been very fatiguing, and they were totally at a loss to conjecture why we had undertaken it. Each seemed to say by his looks—"what have ye journied hither to see?" and one of them even ventured to ask, "*for what Massa come so far?*" when on being informed that it was to see the country, and the river, he exclaimed "*Country, where country?*" "*River wa' river?*" then, all of them uttering a loud,

and most significant laugh, they laid to their oars with redoubled vigour, to conduct us back towards the sea, and the flat fields of its muddy coast. At the very turning of the boat all sense of fatigue was banished, and with unurged exertion they rowed us to the Post-holder's, within three hours and a half; notwithstanding a considerable delay, produced by our going on shore to ascend one of the hills at the side of the water, which we conjectured to be about 200 feet above the level of the river:

We remarked that upon this hill the woods did not appear so thick and crowded as they are commonly found to be upon the lower lands, nearer the sea; but the trees were of stronger growth, and formed pillars of uncommonly majestic stature, being, both in height and diameter, truly immense. Towards the bottom, many of them throw out several flattened projections, which, making so many parts of the trunk, stand round it, like the supporting buttresses of an old cathedral, and, in proportion to their number, form, between them, so many deep recesses, into which

it would be possible to retire for concealment, or for protection, against the heaviest storms of rain; and in some instances as many as ten or twelve persons might find shelter, between these projections, within the round of a single tree.

We arrived at Mr. Mutz's between six and seven o'clock, just as it was growing dark, and found a plentiful supper, prepared by the bounteous Post-holder, for our refreshment.

The society of Mr. Mutz and Pezano afforded us another very delightful evening, and I could gladly have sat until morning listening to their anecdotes and observations; but, at an hour, which to me seemed early, as indeed any hour would, under such circumstances, we retired to our sleeping births, placed as on the preceding night.

At six o'clock we again left our hammocks, when, from the chilliness of the air, all the party complained of cold, and on placing the thermometer at the outside of the door, the Mercury fell to 66—which was one

degree below what it had been at the same hour at the Sand-hill, and as low as I had seen it, in any situation, upon this coast.

Having effected the leading objects of our excursion, it only remained to us to return with all speed, towards the sea, and exchange the wild scenery of rocks, hills, and lofty forests, for the muddy coast, and flat fields of sugar and cotton. Accordingly we made our acknowledgments to Pezano and the Post-holder, and, as soon as we had breakfasted, took our seats in the boat to proceed down the river. Early in the afternoon we arrived at the wood-cutter's, where we had been so hospitably received by the intelligent black woman of the house. Unluckily the master was again absent, but, as before, we were liberally entertained by his kind Wowski, and Mr. John Hill, the mulatto, who, to what we had in the boat, very quickly added a pepper pot, some cassada, and such other provisions as the situation afforded.

He had been into the woods in the morning, and killed a fine laba, which, immediately upon our arrival, was scalded to re-

move its coat, and within a few minutes it was cut in pieces, and put into the kettle with cassada juice, pods of red pepper, and various vegetables, for the purpose of being stewed into a most excellent pepper pot, which in a little time was placed before us upon the table.

The negroes took their meal of rice, and after giving them sufficient rest to fit them for their further toil, we proceeded upon our journey, purposing to sleep at the Loo ; but it grew late before we reached this estate, and the tide being for some time against us, it was a day of severe labour to the slaves, yet they supported it with great cheerfulness ; and, in their willing exertions, evinced the high satisfaction they felt on returning towards the coast and the town. Exclusive of delays and stoppages we were fourteen hours in the boat. Towards the end of the journey we felt extremely anxious on account of the fatigue of the negroes—but upon one of the gentlemen saying that “ surely the Loo must have run away ” they replied with animation “ *neber mind Massa, if he run to de Sand-hill, we catch him dere* ”—shewing their determination to pull on with spirit, until they came to the

Loo, however distant it might be :—the Sandhill was sixteen or seventeen miles further down the river.

The evening was peculiarly still. A dampness hung over the river, and although the thermometer only fell to 74, the air felt chilly; but the moon shone bright, and upon the whole it was pleasant; we therefore felt glad of the opportunity of making a tranquil moonlight journey, upon the silent river, amidst these wild and endless woods of the South American continent. At one spot we heard the sound of paddles upon the water, and on listening to it, found that a canoe was pursuing us. Presently it came up with us, and we were accosted by some negroes, who had been dispatched after us, by the proprietor of an estate we had passed, to invite us to return and spend the evening at his house. At this moment we thought ourselves nearer to the Loo than we really were, and declined the invitation: but afterwards, on account of the slaves, we felt sorry that we had not accepted it. It was half past ten o'clock when we arrived at the Loo, and all the family were in bed; but they quickly roused from their

repose, and, in a short time, a supper of grilled chickens, and various other dishes was set before us, of which we partook with appetite proportioned to the lateness of the hour. At midnight we very gladly sought our friendly hammocks, having suffered nearly as great fatigue from sitting so many hours in the boat, as the negroes had experienced from the greater labour of pulling the oars.

The next morning all the party felt their ears and noses actually pinched with cold, and on observing the thermometer, we found that it had fallen to $65\frac{3}{4}$ being $\frac{1}{4}$ of a degree lower than at the Post-holder's. Some of the gentlemen even complained that they had been kept awake in the night, from the severity of the cold, which was a very unusual occurrence, and such as I had not before witnessed in this climate.

Coffee was served to us at the hour of rising, and we afterwards sat down to a most copious breakfast, consisting of cassada-bread, ham, fresh butter, roasted potatoes, plantains tea, coffee, &c. &c.

We embarked in our boat at the earliest moment of the tide, in order to make a long day, and, if possible, to reach an estate called the *Garden of Eden* at night; which with great toil we did effect at half-past ten o'clock. The whole day was spent in the boat. About dinner-time we found ourselves opposite the Sand-hill, but, recollecting our former unwelcome reception, we determined not to go on shore, and contented ourselves with resting upon our oars, in the middle of the river, to take our dinner of bread and cheese, and cold ham in the boat.

This day was even more severe for the negroes, than the preceding, but they still laboured with great willingness, being impatient to reach the town, besides knowing that, upon the way, there was no other convenient resting place for the night; and that from being longer absent than we had expected, we were all anxious to arrive at Stabroek as speedily as possible. But, however willing the exertions of the slaves, they shewed strong signs of fatigue, long before we came to the Garden of Eden; and it was only by great encouragement, and a well-devised stratagem,

that we were prevented from being detained all night in the boat. Observing that they rowed with languor, and that we made but little progress, the cockswain was desired to exchange the helm for an oar, and to enliven his comrades with a song, encouraging them to join in chorus, and to pull together in musical time. This operated with magic effect. Every slave was inspired, and forgetting all sense of fatigue, they again pulled with unwearied vigour. We were not more pleased with the result of the expedient, than amused by the ready ingenuity with which our wizard cockswain composed his appropriate song, and gave it all the effect of enchantment. Resigning the helm to the weakest slave, he placed himself amidst the crew in the centre of the boat, and pulling his oar stronger than the others, he invented extempore lines for a favorite African tune, finishing each stanza with "*gnyaam gnyaam row*," "*gnyaam gnyaam row*," in which all were to join by way of chorus; and we found that "*gnyaam gnyaam row*," never failed to give additional force to the oar—and consequent head-way to the boat.

The names of the slaves, their wives, their food, drink, and all their pleasures were introduced in song, and tuned to the pulling of the oar : likewise the names of each of the party whom they were rowing, their professions, qualities, and occupations, and their several intentions towards the crew, all made a part of this inspiring air, which, however ridiculous in the words and music—in its effect succeeded even to a wonder. The pulling of the oar, the directing of the helm, even the position of the slaves in the boat, and the compensation each might expect as the reward of his exertions were all adroitly included, and “gnyaam gnyaam row” accompanied each stretch of the oar in chorus. Led on by these persuasive themes, each seemed to emulate the exertions of the all-animating cockswain, and, throwing off the heavy marks of fatigue, they conducted us merrily and speedily to “Garden-Eden.”

Garden-Eden a sugar estate belonging to Mr. T. Cuming.

The party entertained by Mr. Boyce. Phenomenon of a peculiarly formed mulatto. His history, and the opinions concerning him. His figure, &c. The party dine in the boat—return to Stabroek on the afternoon of March 7th. Remarks concerning the excursion. Peculiar fortune of the author. Temperature of Guiana. Range of the thermometer. River navigable nearly to the falls—lower part muddy and saline—distant from the sea clear and pure. Its width. Distance to the falls, noting the different stages. The woods one unbroken forest. The creeks only dark holes opening into the woods. Situations commonly chosen by the Indians for their dwellings. The scenery. The soil. Happy exemption from insects. Soil and atmosphere most favorable to the generation of insects. Matter of surprize that the party should have returned in health, and without accident. Probable advantage which may perpetuate the remembrance of the expedition. Collections made. The perils of the forest. Its silent stillness.

March.

GARDEN-EDEN is an extensive sugar estate, belonging to Mr. T. Cuming, a rich planter of much merit, and of great influence in the colony. It is under the management of a Mr. Boyce, by whom we were received with greetings worthy the prevailing hospitality of Guiana, treated with an excellent supper, and

Falernum wine, and accommodated in great comfort until morning.

Previous to our departure from this estate, I was requested to make a visit at one of the huts in the negro yard ; where, it was said, I might witness a phenomenon, and be “ convinced of a fact which overturns all the sceptical reasonings of medical men,” regarding the influence of imagination upon the conformation of the human frame, and its power of conferring or altering the figure of the *fœtus in utero*.

The subject of our visitation was a mulatto man * * * * * twenty-eight years of age, who is said to have been born with all his bones broken, in consequence of his mother having been present at the horrible execution of a man, who was racked upon the wheel. Perhaps, as one of the tribe, I may be allowed to maintain my scepticism, even with this example before my eyes : still as the appearances of the object, and the circumstances of the case, were peculiar, and some of them well authenticated, I cannot, consistent with the plan of our correspondence, omit

noting to you what I heard related of the history, and what I observed with regard to the figure of this very remarkable mulatto.

The father was a strong and healthy Dutch soldier. The mother a robust, well-formed negro woman. They had four children, all of whom are now arrived at the age of puberty: three of them are strong and handsome mulattoes, healthy and remarkable for the symmetry of their figures; the fourth is the subject in question.

The father is dead,—but the mother is still living; and was brought to me that I might witness the form of her person, inquire into her state of health, and ask her any questions which the case before us should suggest. She assured me that both herself and the father had enjoyed a good state of health, and had considered themselves as having been blessed with a happy exemption from disease: but that when she was recently pregnant of this son, she had unfortunately gone to see the execution of a man who was condemned to be broken upon the wheel; and that upon witnessing this dreadful torture, she

was so struck with horror, as to be taken extremely ill, and was scarcely able to return to her home. She represented the sensations of the moment as very highly distressing, but was unable to convey any accurate description of her feelings. For some time afterwards it was expected that abortion would follow; but that not having happened, she was delivered, at the usual period of gestation, of this broken and disfigured offspring. Her having been present at the execution, and being so frightened as to be suddenly taken ill, were confirmed by one of the gentlemen of our party, with whose family she then lived. The circumstance of her recent pregnancy, at the time, was likewise proved by the fact of her delivery afterwards; but the precise period of it at the date of the execution, I could not accurately ascertain. She is now of advanced age, and somewhat lame, but has still the remains of a well-formed person. Upon examining her I observed an eruption like the cra-cra about the point of one elbow, and a small irregular tumor upon the sternum; but these were explained to be of late origin. In all other respects she appeared to possess health and strength proportionate to her years.

The figure of the son cannot be described by words. His person appeared as if it had been composed by throwing the materials into a bag, with a loose congeries of broken bones, and shaking the whole together until they formed a something approaching to the shape of a human being. It was not the tortuous construction usually occurring from scrofula, or the rickets. He had not the crooked twisted bones of disease. They appeared as if they had literally been broken, and some of them badly united, some not united at all. The common marks of a sickly constitution were absent, and he enjoyed a state of general health fully proportioned to the structure of his frame : Indeed, from the minutest examination, I do not feel myself authorized to consider this very peculiarly deranged conformation as the effect of disease, but am rather inclined to regard it as an extraordinary *lusus naturæ*.

His head was the only part that was well formed, and this, although of natural size, appeared very large, owing to the great disproportion of the body and extremities,

which, from their extreme distortion, had not grown with the growth of the head.

With regard to his mental faculties nothing peculiar was noticed. He answered the questions that were put to him expertly, and was considered in point of intellect to be quite equal to the generality of the people of colour.

I placed my elbow at his side, when he was sitting as upright as his figure would admit, and extending my hand upwards, found that his height, from the seat to the crown of his head, was not quite equal to the length of my fore-arm, from the elbow to the extremities of the fingers.

Every rib, and every limb seemed as if it had been fractured. The long bones of the arms, being divided in the middle, were loosely held together, by a membranous, or ligamentous union. Those of the legs appeared as if they had been broken, and the two parts (or rather the four parts of the tibia and fibula) afterwards placed together in a direction parallel with each other, and thus united into one broad flat bone, the end of which projected

considerably forward in the middle of the leg, thinly covered with integuments, while the lower part of the limb was thrown backwards, with the heel up towards the thigh, so that if he had been placed in the erect position, the points of the toes would have been brought to the ground, instead of the flat part of the foot.

He had not the power of moving from his seat without assistance, except in a very slight degree, by a writhing or twisting, and most unseemly motion, upon his buttocks, wholly unassisted by his limbs. During the day he remains always in the sitting posture, and from the distortion of his lower extremities, these are brought into a position somewhat resembling those of a taylor sitting at his work. With some difficulty he could bring the lower arm to reach the head, but this was effected more from a kind of flexure at the ligamentous union in the middle of the bone of the upper arm, than from a direct motion of the shoulder joint, the action of which was extremely limited, from the want of the fulcrum commonly afforded to the muscles by the bone of the arm.

Having breakfasted, and made our visit to the poor broken-boned mulatto, we took a long walk into the sugar fields of the Garden of Eden, in order to employ ourselves during the remainder of the time, while we were waiting for high water ; and as soon as the tide served, we went into the boat to complete our expedition. Some beef, and a roasted chicken were added to our store of provisions by Mr. Boyce ; and without stopping to go on shore, we took our dinners upon the water, in order that we might have the advantage of the whole tide, which, in this part of the river, was very strongly the friend of our cheerful and willing slaves. Early in the afternoon of March 7th we arrived at the landing place (or Sterling) at Stabroek, having been absent eleven days, during which time we had traversed the woods, visited a variety of estates, and made an excursion of nearly two hundred miles up the river.

No accident, nor disaster, had occurred to interrupt us. We had travelled with great convenience. The utmost harmony and satisfaction had prevailed ; and we returned in good health and spirits, highly

gratified with our expedition. No party, so numerous, had preceded us in journeying so far up the river; and we are told that there is not in the whole colony an equal number of white persons, who have travelled to so great a distance from the coast. That it fell to my lot to be of this party was mere chance—an unfought dispensation of fortune; and one that has afforded me a degree of gratification, which few can have the power, or the opportunity of commanding. The journey was planned entirely to my taste, but without my having any concern in the arrangement, or the execution of it; and I was invited to it merely from the liberal sentiment, that I should enter into the marooning spirit, in which it was formed, with peculiar pleasure and satisfaction. In so far the judgment of my kind and attentive companions was certainly correct, and I am gratefully sensible of their politeness; while I am indebted to them for the high gratification, and all the accommodations of the excursion.

It had happened to me to make a somewhat similar expedition up the river Berbische, and I frequently hear it remarked, that I have

already seen more of the country, the forests, and the rivers of these colonies, than almost any of the inhabitants, although many of them have been here a greater number of years, than I can yet count of months.

I before took an opportunity of noting, to you, the great stability of temperature which prevails upon this coast; and I may now observe that this is not much interrupted even at the distance of 200 miles from the sea. In the cultivated part of the colonies, upon the immediate margin of the ocean, the range of the Thermometer has been mostly confined between 72 and 85 degrees:—At the remotest estates up the river, it at no time exceeded 84, for, although we occasionally felt a degree of closeness in the atmosphere, still the breeze was never entirely absent, and its deficiency was made up by the greater dampness and evaporation from the woods, so that the heat at the falls was not greater than in the full and open breeze of the coast: but, in point of coldness, the variation was more considerable, and we felt more sensibly affected by it. At the Sand-hill we had chilly sensations, although the mercury fell only to

67 degrees : at the Post-holder's it was one morning at 66 : and, another morning at the Loo, when we felt the cold even piercing, it was as low as $65\frac{1}{4}$, which is the lowest I have seen it, during a period of more than ten months, since my arrival in Guiana ; and I may now add, that its greatest range in high situations up the river, far from the coast, has been from $65\frac{1}{4}$ to 84 degrees, while the utmost variation upon the flat and cultivated territory near the sea, has been from 72 to 87.

The river is spacious and not only an ornament of the colony, but highly useful to it, in a commercial point of view. It is navigable for vessels of considerable burden, nearly as far as the falls. Its lower part, to the distance of many miles above the town, is muddy, and strongly impregnated with the salt water of the Atlantic, but from the Sandhill to the falls it is less impure and remarkably clear. We found by the thermometer that it was, at all times, a slight degree warmer than the superincumbent air. In point of width, it varies at different parts, not growing regularly broader as it approaches the sea. At the falls the channel is so narrowed, that, un-

aided by a sling, I was able to throw a stone across it from side to side. At the Post-holder's it was much wider, and it was only with great force of arm, that I was able to shoot an arrow across it, from an Indian bow of middle size : at different parts between these two points, it was of greater width. Beyond the falls it was also broader, than immediately at that spot.

The following rude sketch will convey to you some idea of the distance, from the opening of the river to the falls. It is according to the Dutch measurement, and the most accurate I could obtain :

		Hours.
<div> <div>The Town of Stabroek</div> <div>Garden-Eden</div> <div>The Sand-hill</div> <div>Mr. Bower's</div> <div>The Loo</div> <div>Mr. Lunck's</div> <div>Amelies' Waard</div> <div>Mr. Mansfield's</div> <div>The Post-holder's</div> </div>	<div> <div>}</div> <div>Ho</div> <div>}</div> </div>	<div> <div>The Plantation Gar-</div> <div>den-Eden</div> <div>The Sand-hill</div> <div>Mr. Bower's estate</div> <div>The Loo</div> <div>Mr. Lunck's</div> <div>Amelie's Waard</div> <div>Mr. Mansfield's</div> <div>The Post-holder's</div> <div>The Falls</div> </div>
		4 $\frac{1}{2}$
		5 $\frac{3}{4}$
		3 $\frac{3}{4}$
		1 $\frac{3}{4}$
		2 $\frac{1}{4}$
		2 $\frac{3}{4}$
		2 $\frac{1}{2}$
		6 $\frac{1}{2}$
		6 $\frac{1}{2}$

Total hours, 36 $\frac{3}{4}$

I should remark that this is the time required in journeying up the river, with the tide, occasionally, against the boat. To return towards the sea, with the advantage of tide and current would require less time, by six or seven hours; which shews the extreme inaccuracy of this mode of calculating distance, except upon still canals, such as those of Holland, where the traveller, in a more than common degree, escapes the influence of adventitious circumstances.

The upper part of the river would be very interesting and varied, were its heavy mass of woods broken, and its banks enriched with cultivation; but, from being closely bordered, on all parts, with the crowded forest, it exhibits a degree of sameness which becomes excessively fatiguing to the traveller. At various parts are inlets of smaller rivers, or creeks, which form so many dark channels, into the still darker woods. In passing up the river these are not seen to any extent up their course, but they commonly appear only as deep black holes, at the edge of the forest.

The Indians very seldom erect their

houses upon the immediate banks of the river, and whenever they happen to fix upon a situation near to it, they are careful to leave some of the bush standing, for the purpose of concealing the building. More frequently they place their dwellings upon the borders of the creeks, or within the woods at some distance from the river. From being mere sheds, their habitations are readily constructed, at any spot where they may chance to take up their abode ; and, in the selection of place, concealment, and convenience of embarkation, seem to be the grand desiderata : the latter, indeed, would appear to be essential, as they often pack up every thing that belongs to them, in the family canoe, and suddenly depart to seek another home.

On the subject of scenery, but little occurred worthy of remark. From the uncultivated state of the country you will perceive that it must have exhibited a rude sameness of wood and water. No rich, nor striking point can be found : no varied prospect presents itself from any quarter : no spot is particularly inviting. The palm of pre-eminence lies in a manner undisputed. while water, and

crowds of trees form the universal scene. Whether in a valley, or upon the hills the view is still the same, being confined by the trees immediately around. No opening, no rich nor extended landscape is discovered : all is forest and river—river and forest : or, if you chance to open upon a plain, it is only a flat and wide surface—a vacant savanna, still furrounded with wood, and wholly devoid of picturesque variety.

The Sand-hill was, perhaps, the only exception to this languid sameness of scenery. There, the prospect was somewhat more animated, and from one bank of the river being much elevated, and divested of trees, it overlooked the other, commanding a view across the water, and to a considerable distance over the woods of the opposite shore : still it comprehended only the smooth water, and the smooth green surface of the unbounded forest.

If I speak of the soil, it can be only in vague and general remark ; but it appeared to us that after the land became hilly, and assumed an irregular and unequal surface, it was poor, and not such as seemed capable,

under all the circumstances of climate, of being cultivated to much profit. In some parts it was rocky ; in others sandy ; and, in all, very unlike the rich exuvix which form the flatter lands of this all-fertile coast.

I might notice it as a peculiarly happy exemption that, during our excursion, we were almost wholly free from the tormenting annoyance of insects. In the deepest woods they were only remarkable from their absence. To me the musquitoes constitute, perhaps, the greatest evil of the climate, and my all-bitten limbs were peculiarly sensible of the respite they obtained during this expedition. After we had passed the estate of Mr. Selles, where we spent the first night, I observed only four of these insects, two of which I saw in the woods of the Mabeira creek, and the other two were announced to me by their odious note, at my ear, in the night.

It is remarked that neither in the rudest, nor in the best cultivated parts of these countries do insects most abound. A state of the soil, between high improvement, and wild neglect ; or that sort of climate created by

partial cultivation, is most congenial to these noxious tribes ; and thus does the pestiferous atmosphere of half-cleared woods, and half-cultivated fields seem at once the poison, and the pabulum of animal life :—operating with a twofold power, it generates the minor while it destroys the higher objects of creation.

On reaching the town we were hailed most cordially by our friends, who, in our protracted return, had anticipated all the evils of sickness and misfortune ; and it seemed matter of surprize that so large a party should have concluded so long an excursion, all in good health, and without having met with any kind of accident or disaster. To some of the gentlemen, the change from their ordinary habits and mode of life, was great, and it had not been surprizing if in this climate, under such circumstances, troublesome effects had ensued ; but, happily, from the time of my losing the threatening sensations which had oppressed me at the period of our embarkation, not an individual of the party suffered even an hour's interruption of health.

We derived much gratification from the

expedition, and although our collections from the animal, and mineral kingdoms, were but inconsiderable, we profited of the vegetable world very amply; and it is probable that the remembrance of our excursion will be perpetuated: for, in the course of a few years, its effects will become conspicuous, from a valuable assemblage of the plants and fruits of the forest enriching the sugar estates, and cotton fields of the colonists.

Of the animal world a few monkeys and Amazonian parroquets constituted the whole of our collection; and of minerals all we had an opportunity of procuring were a few coarse specimens of common whinstone, which we broke from the bed of "the Falls," and the rocks in their vicinity. Of the implements and apparatus of the Indians we procured a liberal store.

Much had been said of the multiplied perils of the forest, and we had heard of fierce tigers, enormous snakes, poisonous serpents, runaway negroes, ferocious savages, and various other dangerous inhabitants of the woods and the waters, but it did not happen to

us to be interrupted by any of them ; and although tigers, serpents, bush-negroes, and wild Indians, doubtless, exist in these regions, the peril to be apprehended from them, bears no sort of proportion to the extravagant alarm pictured by the fearful imaginations of stay-at-home travellers. In many parts the profound stillness of the forest conveyed the idea of a lifeless solitude, uninhabited by man, beast, bird, or insect ; indeed from the utter silence which prevailed, it might have seemed that we had travelled beyond the limits of animated creation ; and that we had literally, reached the end of the world !

LETTER XXIII.

The author's horse a victim to the climate. The detachment of the St. Domingo hospital staff receives instructions to leave Guiana. Author's reflections on the change. Greetings of a negro woman on the author's return from his river Excursion. Heads of news which meet the ears of the party on their return from "the Falls."

Demarara, March 18.

AT my return from our late excursion the first object that attracted my attention, upon approaching the barracks of the hospital department, was a string of negroes singing out in the sailors' cry,—yeoh-yeoh, yeoh-yeoh, and hauling at a long rope, towing something heavy round the corner of the building. Curiosity arrested me, for a moment; when, alas! I discovered at the end of the cord, the body of my poor horse! whp, in the last night of his master's absence, had fallen a victim to the relentless foe, who spares neither man, nor the patient steed. He was now being dragged away to his grave, and my pause of curiosity only brought me the

sad gratification of casting a last look upon his corpse.

This is a heavy loss to me, and less on account of the exorbitant price of horses in these colonies, than from the extreme difficulty, or perhaps the impossibility of finding another, at any price whatever. I had long waded through the mud before an opportunity offered of providing myself, and by mere chance, I had, at length, been well suited—but I had scarcely brought my horse into condition fit for riding, before he was snatched from me, by what is often termed the seasoning malady of the climate.

It happens, however, that I shall not long feel this privation; as letters have, at length, arrived from head-quarters, containing orders for my removal from the coast of Guiana to St. Domingo. This is the arrangement to which I had been looking from my earliest arrival in these colonies, but on account of it being so long delayed, and my having received instructions for continuing here, I had begun to expect that the hospital staff, already at St. Domingo, had been found sufficient for the

duties of that station, without recalling the detachment of the medical department serving upon this coast: but, by the letters which have now reached me, I learn that the direful malady of these regions has been severely fatal among the hospital officers at St. Domingo; and that, although the number of troops is considerably decreased, the medical attendants have suffered so extensively, that strong reinforcements are necessary, to enable the hospital department to do justice to the, yet, multitudes of sick.

In so far as this change of station will afford me an opportunity of seeing more of the Western World, I shall hail it with satisfaction; but my heart sorrows at the thought of treading in the sandals of my lost brethren and comrades,—men, with whom I have lived in habits of intimacy, and close friendship—partaking of the same perils, eating from the same dish, and reposing in the same cabin; and although I neither regard the present afflicting scourge of our army as contagious, nor feel the slightest personal apprehension of disease, still I cannot but experience a mournful depression, which must in a

degree unfit me for the urgent duties I may have to encounter upon the very spot where my comrades have fallen. Nor will it be without some sense of regret that I shall quit the hospitals of my own creating, and which, after nearly twelvemonths of anxious exertion, I have now brought into a state well fitted for affording the necessary comfort, and accommodations to the sick. Indeed I may observe that notwithstanding my desire to visit the different parts of the West Indies, habit had reconciled me to this coast, and I had felt a kind of satisfaction in the prospect of quietly directing a department I had so earnestly toiled to establish, and to arrange; and which had so long filled my measure of anxious care: but you know how entirely I have given myself to the necessities of the service, and will do me the justice to believe that wherever my exertions can be rendered most useful, there I shall be most ready to execute the duties of my appointment.

I should not omit noting to you that, on my late return, I was almost stifled with the greetings of a fat old negro woman of the house, who, at the moment I appeared in her

fight, ran to me in loud shoutings of joy, and, seizing me in her arms, squeezed me until I had scarcely power to speak; at the same time calling out to one of her sable companions—"Come and help Jenny hug Massa, for me no savez hug Massa enough, for tell him how glad Jenny for see Massa again." But the gratulations of both Jenny and her friend together, became alarmingly impressive; and, in order to prevent the evils of impeded respiration, I was compelled rudely to force myself from their jetty embraces.

The leading heads of news which met our return, were the king's proclamation on the unsuccessful issue of Lord Malmesbury's Embassy to Paris — the confirmation of an expedition from Martinique having captured the Island of Trinidad—and a report that another expedition was fitting out against Porto Rico. We have since heard of the disastrous fate of a French squadron upon our coast, and their unsuccessful invasion of Ireland: and it is now rumoured that an expedition will soon sail from the islands to attack Surinam.

The capture of Trinidad we hail as an event peculiarly fortunate for these colonies, as it again opens to us the prospect we had contemplated, previous to the rupture with Spain, and promises to us a supply of fresh provisions, by our establishing a contract for the purchase of some of the wild cattle, which are found in the woods of that settlement.

LETTER XXIV.

Celebration of the Stadtholder's birth-day. Conduct of a suifant "patriot." Celebration of St. Patrick's day. Conclusion of the festival. Insolent manifesto of Victor Hugues. News received of the arrival of the captured Ship "Cotton Planter" with invalids after a passage of a hundred and eight days. A sale of negroes. Infants brought to point to a slave as to a lottery ticket. Average value of the slaves. Remark of the Agent. Indecorum of some female purchasers. Anxious appeals of a parent and her offspring. General sympathy concerning them. A white negro. A piebald negrefs.

Demarara, March 29.

I MIGHT have told you in my last letter that the eighth inst., the day after our return from our river excursion, was the Stadtholder's birth-day, and consequently a day of festivity at Demarara. It was commemorated, by the Dutch officers, in our service, giving a splendid ball and supper at their barrack in the evening: all the best company and the best provisions of the colony were assembled on the occasion. The ball-room was extremely crowded, and although it was so intensely hot that it was matter of astonishment how

any person could support the fatigue of dancing in it, still the ladies, feeble and languid as they commonly appear, so much enjoyed their favorite amusement, as not to retire to the supper room until near two o'clock in the morning. The supper was elegant and very handsomely served. It consisted of nearly 150 dishes, and was composed of all the best fruits and dainties of the colony. Unhappily the harmony of the festival was interrupted by the perverse conduct of one of the party, a *soi-disant patriot*, who, in the violence of his politics, opposed himself to the general will of the company, and refused to stand up to drink the health of the Stadtholder. The officers were highly incensed, at meeting with such an act of rudeness, and insult from one of their guests—and some even proposed to toss the “patriot chair” out at window.

On the 17th we had another great festival, in honor of St. Patrick, given by a party of gentlemen from the “*land of saints*.” We sat down to the number of fifty, English, Irish, and Dutch. True Irish hospitality spread the bounteous board, and we were regaled with music, toasts, and songs appropriate to the

day. Harmony and good cheer prevailed, and in social conviviality the evening wore pleasantly away, without the scene of noisy intoxication I had expected.

The party separated about eleven o'clock, when most of the guests retired to their respective homes; but the next morning I learned that a select few of St. Patrick's devoted sons, conceiving that they had not done due honors to their patron, again took their seats, and drank to the dear island in more copious revelry, enlivening their midnight shouts and toasts with the all-animating chorus of shattered glasses, decanters, and bottles.

You will not be surprized to learn that a most insolent manifesto has lately met our hands, published by Victor Hugues, in which he calls the inhabitants of Tobago, Demarara and Essequibo, Berbische, St. Lucie, and St. Domingo a herd of traitors, and gives orders that they should be regarded as pirates, if captured on board of privateers. All these settlements he declares to be in a state of siege, asserting that they are garrisoned by emigrants—a set of men, who, being without country,

flag, or government, he insists, cannot be entitled to the same terms as "*polished nations* !"

He authorises and directs ships of war and privateers to make prizes of all vessels trading to these ports : and further, he charges the Americans with not having maintained the articles of the treaty, between the two nations ; and therefore proclaims that they have forfeited the friendship of the French Republic !

We read with great satisfaction, the arrival of the ship Cotton-Planter at Portsmouth, after a passage of a *hundred and eight* days from Demarara. Not having sooner heard of her, we had many anxious conjectures regarding her safety. She is one of the heavy Dutch vessels which fell into our possession on the capture of these colonies ; and being a large ship, and commodious for conveying troops across the Atlantic, we put a party of invalids, with ulcers, on board her, to be carried to England, under the immediate care of Mr. Beane, one of the mates of the general hospital ; and subject to the command of Captain De Courcy of the 93d regiment.

Both from her form and bulk, we had expected that she might make a tedious passage ; but, even with all the delays of our late ill-fated expedition in remembrance, our anticipations had not led us to imagine that, without some great disaster, the voyage could have been protracted to a period of nearly sixteen weeks.

Not simply from curiosity, but from a desire of acquiring instruction, from whatever occurs of peculiar interest, I have again been led to be present at one of those most humiliating scenes—a sale of *human* merchandise, where I saw what is here termed a *prime cargo* of three hundred *men* and *women* from the Gold Coast of Africa—all human beings like ourselves, exposed to public *vendue* even as the herds of sheep and oxen in Smithfield market ! But although I had now been more than a year in the West Indies, I was glad to find that my European feelings were not yet so entirely blunted, as to allow me to witness such a scene without experiencing the painful sensations, which naturally arise in the breast of an Englishman, upon seeing his fellow-creatures thus miserably degraded.

The crowd was as great as at a Coventry show-fair ; and amidst the throng I observed many females, as well white as of colour, who, decked out in tinsel finery, had all come to the *roupe* to buy slaves, either for themselves, their masters, or keepers. Infants, too, were brought, as before, to point the lucky finger to a sable drudge for *little self*, upon the same prejudice which leads mama to take dear babe to a lottery office, to finger out the happy ticket, which is to make little Miffey's fortune !

The poor blacks were not exposed to public gaze upon a high stool, in order to be first examined, and then knocked down at the hammer, as at the Dutch sale at Berbische,—but were divided into three great lots, according to their value ; and, the price being fixed, the purchasers were left to select from whichever division they might prefer. Boys, from eleven to fourteen years of age, sold for 600 or 700 guilders. The price of the women was from 700 to 800 ; and of the men from 700 to 900 ; but a few of the strongest were valued somewhat higher. The agent who conducted the sale is a liberal man, possessed of humane sentiments, and a cultivated mind,

but it is, unfortunately, *his calling* to deal in human flesh ; and he very justly remarked to me, that in following this occupation, it is necessary to *give an opiate* to the finer feelings of nature.

The coarse airs, and indecent vulgarity exhibited by a negress, (who had probably been herself exposed in a similar manner,) and a mulatto woman, her associate, towards some of these poor African girls, were both striking and disgusting. Each of these cloudy nymphs had wheedled her lord to grant her the privilege of choosing a slave, to be the immediate attendant of her dark-hued person ; and in making their selection they used as little delicacy in touching, turning about, and trying their fellow blacks, as a butcher would in examining a pen of any other sort of black cattle in an open market. Common decency was outraged in these proceedings, which grossly aggravated a scene that, under its best colours, is most cruelly humiliating.

I committed a heavy trespass upon my feelings by remaining for a considerable time at this sale, but at length, hurt and shocked

at what I had witnessed, and led into painful reflection upon the sadly chequered lot of our species, I made my retreat from this market of human woe, where not only the laws of decorum are openly invaded, and the rules of propriety set at defiance, but where all the social ties of our nature are broken down and bartered for gold.

Amidst a scene, every way repugnant to humanity I was pleased to remark that a general sympathy was excited towards one particular family, whose appeals to the compassion of the multitude were not less powerful than their claims. This family consisted of a mother, three daughters, and a son. The parent, although the days of her youth were past, was still a well-looking woman; the children appeared to be from fourteen to twenty years of age: they were very like the mother, and still more resembled each other, being all of distinguished face and figure, and remarkably the handsomest negroes of the whole cargo. Their distress lest they should be separated, and sold to different masters, was so strongly depicted upon their countenances, and expressed in such lively, and im-

pressive appeals, that the whole crowd were, impulsively, led to commiserate their sufferings; and, by universal consent, they were removed from the three great lots, and placed in a separate corner by themselves, in order that they might all be sold to the same master.

Observing their extreme agitation, I was led particularly to notice their conduct, as influenced by the terror of being torn from each other, and I may truly say, that I witnessed a just and faithful representation of *the distressed mother!* and such as might bid defiance even to the all-imitative powers of a Siddons! for the fears of the parent, lest she should be separated from her children, or these from each other, were anxious and watchful beyond all that imagination could paint, or the most vivid fancy pourtray. When any one approached their little group, or chanced to look towards them with the attentive eye of a purchaser, the children, in broken sobs, crouched nearer together, and the tearful mother, in agonizing impulse, instantly fell down before the spectator, bowed herself to the earth, and kissed his feet; then, alternately clinging to his legs, and pressing her children to her

bosom, she fixed herself upon her knees, clasped her hands together, and, in anguish, cast up a look of humble petition, which might have found its way even to the heart of a Caligula!—and, thus, in Nature's truest language, did the afflicted parent urge the strongest appeal to his compassion, while she implored the purchaser, in dealing out to her the hard lot of slavery, to spare her the additional pang of being torn from her children:—to forbear exposing her to the accumulated agonies which would result from forcing those asunder, whom the all-wise disposer of events had bound together by the most sacred ties of nature and affection.

I forget if I mentioned to you in my former letter, when speaking of the phœnomenon I had seen, in the person of a twisted and broken mulatto at Garden Eden, that he was the property of Mr. Cuming, our very hospitable neighbour at the plantation Kitty, near to Fort William Frederic; where, I may now tell you that, since my return from “the falls,” I have had an opportunity of seeing two other striking phœnomena of our species, in the persons of a *white negro*, and a *piebald*

negress. These are very uncommon objects, more particularly the latter, and it is remarkable that the three most striking examples of natural curiosity in the whole colony, or perhaps in the West Indies, should happen all to be the property of the same individual.

Were not Mr. Cuming's fortune already amply made, and were he disposed to avail himself of such a method of acquiring it, he might, probably, ensure it to a vast amount, by having these very singular specimens of the human race conducted to Europe, and exhibited for the gratification of the curious.

The *white negro*, as he is denominated, is a boy about twelve years of age, who was born on board of ship, on the passage from Guinea, of perfectly white skin, although both his father and mother were jet black. He is even *whiter*; but I know not if I should say *fairer*, than Europeans, for it is a dead chalk-white, without the agreeable relief of the fine blue veins, and ruddy tints of an extra-tropical, or more particularly of a British skin. In form and feature he strictly resembles other negroes, having the head and face long, with

the hair short and curling like wool, the mouth large, with thick lips, and the nose broad and flat. His eyes are blue, the eye-brows and eye-lashes white, as is likewise the hair, which from being slightly tinged with yellow, assumes, in a small degree, that particular hue, which is, more commonly than correctly, termed red. On looking at a strong light, his eyes are affected with a twinkling motion, such as is observed in the Albinos or Nyctalops; and from the axes of the two eyes not accurately converging, a slight degree of strabismus is perceptible. It would seem therefore that it is a variation which stands much in the same relation with respect to the negroes, as the Nyctalops with respect to ourselves. His skin being more than commonly irritable, is highly susceptible of injury; and quickly rises into blisters, on his being exposed to the open rays of the sun.

The case of the woman is even more novel and singular than that of the boy; her peculiarity being the effect of an extraordinary change, and not of original conformation. She is about thirty years of age, and, until the last six or seven years, was of completely

able skin, differing in no respect from other negroes ; nor do either her form or features now offer any thing remarkable, but, from the profoundest black, her surface is growing perfectly white. She is of good figure, has been always regarded as having a strong and healthy constitution, and, for many years, has been employed as a washerwoman in Mr. Cuming's family.

No probable cause is known, nor even suggested, for the change, but about five or six years ago, some white spots appeared upon her extremities, and, from that time, she has been gradually losing the natural blackness of her surface.

This uncommon change commenced in the parts most remote from the centre of circulation, and is slowly, though regularly, proceeding towards the parts nearer to the heart. The feet, hands, legs, and arms, have already lost their sable hue, and are now even whiter than those of an European. Her nose and ears are also white, and some patches of white are spreading upon the face, neck, and bosom ; but her body yet remains profoundly black ;

and although this extraordinary conversion seems to be progressively advancing, if it proceeds as slowly as it has hitherto done, it may be still several years before the whole of the dark colouring be removed. Her hair and eyes retain their original blackness, and have not yet any appearance of participating in the change.

It is remarkable that the cuticle of the parts which have grown white, like the pale skin of the boy, is very subject to rise into blisters upon being exposed to the sun, while no such effect is produced upon the parts which remain black.

The woman is still in good health, and appears to remain entirely free from disease; as she was, at the time this peculiar change began: but she is extremely low and dejected concerning this event, which she regards as the greatest evil that could have befallen her. She has a great dislike to be seen or to have questions asked her, and more particularly by strangers. When sent for, that I might look at her, she came to me with extreme reluctance, exhibited strong marks

of agitation while she remained, and went away in tears. She is the wife of one of Mr. Cuming's slaves, and has had several children, who differed in no respect from the offspring of other negroes.

LETTER XXV.

Little things sometimes made important. Arbitrary conduct displayed towards a free Mulatto woman, called princess Changuion. Climate improved. March the finest month of the twelve. Musquitos unable to fly against the breeze. Roads dry and good. Frequency of the refreshing showers of Guiana. A ship arrives direct from England. Brings a supply of stores for the hospital. Author receives a copy of the new regulation for "improving the situation of regimental surgeons." Some remarks upon the army medical department. Sir Ralph Abercromby sails from Martinique with an expedition against Porto Rico. Promotion of the author's friend Mr. Blackader.

Demarara, April 19.

YOU will not be surprized to hear that, although we are removed from the busy metropolis of England, and all the gay scenes and adventures indicated in the *jeux d'esprit*, *bons mots*, *doubles entendres*, and the many idly amusing histories which daily swell the columns of the newspapers, we are not without our little cabals and intrigues, and anecdotes, and *particular beads* of news, which, in the absence of more weighty occurrences,

often acquire a degree of importance they do not merit, and become the subjects of general conversation and concern. At present the prevailing topic is not devoid of interest. It concerns a mulatto woman called princess Changuion, regarding whom a high degree of interest has been excited, in consequence of a proclamation which has lately appeared in the Essequibo Gazette, and which, has called forth a sense of compassion, and of party feeling in her behalf.

She is a free mulatto, and was lately the favored dulcinea of a person high in office: and from circumstances having rendered her name the general theme of the day, her crimes, her merits, and her sufferings are warmly canvassed in every society, and even those who never saw, nor heard of her before, would seem, from their confident remarks to be intimately acquainted with every particular of her history and conduct. It has been thought that in consequence of having committed an offence, which certainly would not appear to be of the first magnitude, the arm of power has been too severely extended

towards her ; and from the sentence seeming to augur of prejudice, it is even hinted that private, or party pique, has had its influence in deciding the quota of punishment :—indeed if loud whisper may be credited, her persecutors have been exasperated against her, in proportion as others have betrayed feelings of compassion towards her.

As the tale is told, some dispute had arisen between a Dutch dame, and this yellow *princess*, in which the white lady alleged some unjust accusation against the mulatto, and otherwise so ill treated her as to provoke her to hold up her hand in a menacing manner ; for which most heinous offence, the poor Changuion has been subjected to an arbitrary confinement, and sentenced to be further punished with a severe flogging—burning in the forehead—the loss of an ear—and banishment. This you will readily perceive, was dealing out, to a person in freedom, the cruel treatment practised upon slaves, and for no better reason, than because nature had been pleased to cover her with a yellow skin. The undue severity used towards her has had

the effect of animating the benevolent exertions of those who regard her as a victim of prejudice, and it being known that in some countries not only law and justice, but even despotic power might be softened by gold, due inquiries were made, and it was understood that a thousand guilders, properly employed, might soften, if not efface the decree. But, from the influence of a power opposed to the party, who thus interested themselves in the cause of humanity, the punishment was ordered to be inflicted, at the very moment when the thousand guilders were expected to be taken as the price of her release. Still it happened that the iron arm of despotism was disappointed of its blow ; for, in the course of the night, preceding the morning when this unhappy female was to have been led out to punishment, she contrived to effect her escape from confinement ; and it is whispered, in a certain circle, that she will probably find a secure place of concealment, until she can meet with an opportunity of executing the latter part of her sentence by *self-banishment*.

You will be pleased to know that the climate upon this coast has lately become quite

salubrious, and that our sick list has rapidly decreased, in consequence of great numbers of patients being discharged, and but few admitted. I may also remark that we have found the month of March the most pleasant, as well as the most healthy season of the year; for not only has the weather been drier, the breeze stronger, and the air cooler, but we have been less subject to prickly heat, and less annoyed with musquitoes. Happily these tormenting insects have not been able to wing their light bodies against the increased strength of the breeze. The roads have likewise been dry, and peculiarly pleasant for travelling, which in these colonies is no trifling consideration; for, in consequence of their being low, and flat, and muddy, a moderate fall of rain leaves them deep in wet, and almost impassable.

Although the month of March has been the driest of all the twelve, some parts of the months of October, November, and February were likewise very fine, and the muddy roads were then, also, dry and smooth.

At length I may announce to you that a

ship is arrived direct from England ; by which we are furnished with an ample supply of hospital dresses, bedding, and other stores, for the accommodation of the sick. The arrival of these things is somewhat late, it must be confessed, but it will afford me the satisfaction of leaving the department well provided, and free from the many inconveniences, to which it has been, necessarily, exposed while under my direction.

A copy has also reached my hand of the new regulations, for improving the situation of regimental surgeons, by doing away their medicine money, and other perquisites, and consolidating their pay into a regular and specific sum : likewise for establishing their rank, and putting them upon a footing with military officers, in respect to quarters and field allowances. This is an important and well advised arrangement, and does honor to its projector. Indeed it is matter of surprize that the old system of granting medicine money, and other perquisites, should have been so long continued, since it not only offered an inadequate reward, but held out encouragement to a neglect of duty, by lessening the

emoluments of the surgeon, in proportion as he supplied the requisite means to the sick.

But I am sorry to remark, that the new regulation, excellent as it is, from being limited to regimental surgeons, stops short of its effect. To have rendered it complete in its operation, it should have extended further, and have defined the rank of the different officers of the hospital staff: and thus it might have become a general, and standard regulation for the whole medical body; and have prevented many cavillings, and unpleasant occurrences upon service; while it would have given the department the respectability that is due to it, and have fixed its importance among military men. As it now stands, it is manifestly defective, from giving to a regimental surgeon a certain rank, of which it leaves him again divested, upon his receiving promotion to the staff. The regulation might also have gone still further, with additional benefit, and have fixed the title as well as the rank of the various medical appointments, for, at present, without a due regard to the military system, the department is branching out into multiplied

divisions, devoid of the appropriate distinctions of rank and duty.

It would perhaps be a task, which might puzzle the whole war office, with the army medical board included, to discriminate between the endless ramifications and subdivisions which are made to display themselves in the army medical code; more especially with respect to the higher appointments, under all the various degrees of physicians and surgeons, and deputies, and assistants, and *heads* and *principals*—such as, “physician general, surgeon general, inspector general of regimental hospitals, inspector general of hospitals, deputy inspector general of hospitals, assistant inspector general of hospitals, director of hospitals, inspector of hospitals, assistant inspector of hospitals, field inspector of hospitals, head of hospitals, principal medical officer of hospitals *,” &c. &c. &c.

* Many of these worse than useless distinctions have lately been done away, and some general regulations established; but still the system is incomplete; and much yet remains to be done, before the medical department can take on that uniformity of character, or proceed with that uniformity of movement, which is requisite in so important a branch of the military body.

By a late arrival from head quarters, we learn that the commander in chief has failed, with the expedition recently fitted out at Martinique, and supposed to be bound to Porto Rico. We hope soon to ascertain its destination, by receiving happy tidings of its issue.

By the same occasion we find that our late comrade Mr. Blackader has at length succeeded in the object of his wishes, and obtained promotion to a staff appointment ; but these, otherwise pleasing, tidings come to us sadly clouded by accompanying intelligence ; for, as it too often happens in the army, news of one friend being promoted, is news of another friend being dead ; and, on the present occasion, we learn with sorrow, that the path of promotion has been opened to Surgeon Blackader, by the removal of his comrade Ford to the great home of eternity.

LETTER XXVI.

Author addresses his friend on the anniversary of his arrival in Guiana. Has much anxiety respecting the fate of his comrades at St. Domingo. Much rain falls in Guiana at the beginning of April; but the wet season delayed. Author visited by the medical practitioners of the colony. Remarks of Dr. E. concerning the yellow fever. His method of cure. His observations respecting the practice of medicine in general. His opinion regarding an intended publication by his friend. Author makes visits to several gentlemen upon the coast. A West India garden.

Demarara, April 23.

ON this day last year I first set foot upon the coast of South America; and when I take a retrospect of all that has passed before me within the twelvemonth, review the urgent duties I have had to sustain, and reflect upon the fatal numbers who have perished around me, I not only find that it has been the most busied, and most perilous year of my life, but feel highly sensible how much I have cause of

thankfulness, in being still blessed with health and strength, to perform the various duties of my appointment.

With much anxiety I look to St. Domingo, and it would be a peculiar satisfaction to me, could I know that my comrades upon that station, have arrived as happily at the end of the first year as myself :—but, from reports of the dread fatality in that quarter, I tremble for the fate of my friends ; and, being now upon the eve of joining them, the idea that they may have fallen among the many victims of that inhospitable region, weighs upon my heart in accumulated heaviness. I wish, yet dread to hear of them ; and in the apprehension lest tidings from thence might rob me of the delightful anticipation of again meeting those I esteem, I could almost court the present ignorance until my arrival ; for unhappy news of my late associates, would cloud my best hopes, and deprive me of what, alone, can render tolerable the thousand troubles and annoyances of a long sea voyage.

The date of my letter also reminds me, that at this period, last year, the wet season

was setting in upon the coast of Guiana ; and it calls to my recollection, that on the 23d of April, upon landing from our ships, we had to tramp our way to the town, at a mile distant, beset with heavy rain and excessive heat, and almost up to our knees in mud and clay.

This year, we had a considerable fall of rain, about the beginning of the present month, which many imagined to be the commencement of the wet season ; but the showers proved to be only those of a lunar period, and the weather has since been dry and pleasant, holding out to us the hope that, instead of anticipating the usual time of its return, the invasion of the wet season may be delayed even latter than is common.

It usually begins somewhat earlier in these colonies, than in the islands ; and, also, in the dry season, this coast is more frequently refreshed with occasional showers. These mostly occur about the periods of spring-tides, and are not wholly suspended even in the arid month of March : so that instead of suffering from long continued drought, no part of the year can be otherwise considered as a

dry season, than comparatively with those months which are almost incessantly wet.

With only the same proportion of rain, the seasons in Guiana, from the flatness of the country, and the nature of the soil, will necessarily appear to be less dry, than in the islands, where the land is more hilly and irregular, and so disposed as to favor either the percolation, or the passing off of the water. Here we have one wide and flat surface of clay, and the rain that falls lies upon the roads, and the fields, until the thirsty atmosphere drinks it all up again; hence the wet, from every shower, continues to be visible long after it has reached the ground, or it remains to be increased by new torrents; and from this circumstance it is evident that the rains, which fall about the full and change of the moon, will cause more wet here, than in the islands, where from the soil being more dry and porous, all appearance of the shower vanishes with the cloud that emits it.

From this circumstance, more than from the real quantity of rain that falls, strangers arriving here from Europe, or the islands, particularly if they should expect a total absence

of rain during the dry months, might be led to imagine that, in Guiana, there is only one continued wet season throughout the year.

Of late I have been honored with visits from several of my medical brethren of the colony, with a view of ascertaining the effect of the remedies used in the military hospitals, and particularly of mercury, in cases of yellow fever.

From these gentlemen I have also had the opportunity of gaining much professional information. Among them was Dr. E. from whose conversation and remarks I derived peculiar gratification. He is a man of talents and observation, and has profited of an extensive experience. In speaking of the yellow fever, he remarked that the medical men, who reside in the interior of the islands and settlements of the West Indies, have scarcely a better opportunity of knowing the real character of that disease, than those "who practise medicine in the country villages of England." He considered those only to be well acquainted with this dread malady, who had the opportunity of seeing it among Europeans, or Americans

newly arrived within the tropics. It had been his lot to witness it but too frequently, from being employed among the sailors of the trading vessels upon the river; and it appeared that he had observed with accuracy, and made himself well acquainted with the nature of the disease.

The doctor's experience had taught him to place very little reliance upon bark, mercury, or any of the remedies commonly employed; but he thought that he had witnessed the most decided benefit from the Indian method of employing hot and cold bathing; and he observed, that, where the hot bath could not be conveniently provided, he had found equal advantage from ordering the head and neck to be washed with hot water, and immediately afterwards dashing three or four buckets of cold water upon the patient. "The very sudden relief obtained from this remedy," added the doctor, "is often equally astonishing and effectual."

Speaking upon medical subjects, generally, Dr. E. observed that he had been, at one time, a speculative theorist, and, like

many other young physicians, had felt assured that he could prescribe a curative remedy for every disorder *in his closet* ! where, with vast wisdom, he had reasoned the human body into a mere machine, brought the practice of physic to a syllogism, and deduced the cure of every malady from the strictest logic ! But, when called to the bed-side, he was surprised to find that the extinction of the disease did not follow the administration of his remedies, in the certain train of cause and effect : he, therefore, from seeing no error in his deductions, began to suspect his positions, and to apprehend that he had been erecting fanciful systems, without any solid foundation. At length, when taught, by repeated disappointment, to employ a more just reasoning, he perceived that one great principle had opposed itself to the regular inferences he had expected to flow, in smooth current, from the data upon which he had so pleasantly raised his hypothetical structure : in short he found that, instead of the human body being a mere machine of springs and wheels, man was possessed of *vitality*, and that, disregarding this very important principle, he had long been grovelling in the dark,

bending facts to theory, instead of founding his theory upon the secure basis of facts.

The same gentleman informed me that a friend of his, in these regions, was about to publish a book, upon medical subjects ; against which he had urged every friendly expostulation, feeling assured, from an intimate acquaintance with the author, that the work could neither do him credit, nor the public service ; being, necessarily, a mere chamber production, and wholly deficient in that great requisite, practical experience. But his remonstrances were in vain. His friend had read himself into a belief of what he was about to write—and the world will have to judge of the production.

I have lately taken a ride to make some visits at Mahaica, and at various estates upon the coast, and, in the course of my excursion, I waited upon Mr. M'Kenzie, one of my fellow-travellers upon our late expedition up the river, at whose home I had the high gratification of exploring a rich garden of herbs, plants, flowers, and fruits.

It may surprize you to know that in a country where vegetation is so rapid, and so much under control, as upon this prolific coast, a well cultivated garden should be so extremely rare, as to appear quite a novelty: but it too commonly happens that those who court the smiles of fortune, by tilling the tropical fields, attend only to the cultivation of sugar, coffee, and cotton, which plants are often seen growing up to the very doorway, or almost creeping in at the windows of the dwelling, not the smallest spot being reserved for garden, pleasure ground, or orchard. But the intelligent and accomplished proprietor of Lusignan has a mind superior to the little penury which, neglecting the agreeable and ornamental, devotes only to the lucrative, and sacrifices the common comforts of life to the sole purpose of amassing a few additional dollars. Here the cotton is planted at a proper distance from the house, and the immediate environs are laid out in gardens, or enriched with fruits, shrubs, and other useful, or ornamental trees. Around the dwelling luxuriate, in a generous soil, the fruitful bread-tree, the cucumber tree, the cocoa-nut, the stately mountain-cabbage, the

grenadillo, the water-lemon, grapes of different species, mangos, figs, cherries, almonds, star-apples, pines, and a multitude of other fruits; together with a great variety of the more rare, and beautiful plants and flowers of these regions.

All the comforts and advantages of an European garden it was here proved might be far exceeded in this bountiful soil, which so rapidly, and abundantly returns the labour bestowed upon it. A long walk, finely shaded with grenadillos, the fruit of which hung in profusion over our heads, had been planted only a few months before. The young shoots of fig-trees, whose parent branches are cut away every year, were quite loaded with fruit, and the grapes hung in heavy clusters, from single stems,—all the other parts of the vines being entirely pruned away. Indeed, so prolific are the plants, and so luxuriant their growth, that to ensure an abundance of fruit, it seems only necessary to commit seeds and shoots to the earth, and to cut out, from time to time, the greater part of the wood of the trees.

Amidst the flowers I observed many that were highly fragrant, and of far more pleasant odour than those I had commonly met with in this country, and which had led me to believe that nature had very sparingly scattered her perfumes, among the plants of this coast ; and had I not seen the garden I am speaking of, I might have left the colonies, impressed with an idea that the flowers of Guiana were wholly devoid of that delicious fragrance, for which those of Europe are so highly esteemed.

LETTER XXVII.

Author transcribes for his friend some notes on the general subject of the colonies. Unjust prejudice respecting the climate. General appearance of the coast and the estates. Roads. Colony paths. Mode of preserving—also of procuring fresh water. Peculiar advantages. Seasons. Form of government. Members of council—how elected—qualifications. Court of policy. Court of justice. Commissary court. The fiscal. Division of the country into districts. Law concerning public roads and bridges. The land given by grants from the states-general. Extent of the grants. Original settlements made far up the rivers. British enterprise leads the cautious Hollander to the sea coast. This now spread with rich fields. Number of plantations upon the east coast of Demarara. Average produce of a cotton estate. Stock required for its cultivation. Average produce and stock of a coffee estate. Average stock and produce of a sugar estate. The colonies of Guiana a most valuable capture. Number of slaves in the colony of Essequibo and Demarara. Number possessed by an individual planter. Immense fortune acquired by Mynbeer Boode. Concerning the wages of labour. Slaves let out for hire. Mode of compensating medical attendance. Prices of provisions:—of some colonial productions:—of some articles of common use. Further remarks.

Demarara, April.

THE commanding officer having required me to wait the reply of the commander in

chief, to a letter upon the subject of our recall from these colonies, I have availed myself of the interval, to make out a complete set of the returns and accounts of the whole hospital department, from the date of our arrival upon this coast ; and having toiled at official papers for several weeks, with all the application of an office clerk, I feel that I cannot better devote my remaining leisure, than in transcribing for your eye a few notes which I have collected, from time to time, upon the general subject of these colonies.

To an intelligent and inquiring mind, like yours, every thing that concerns mankind, and the countries we inhabit, must be strongly interesting—the general appearance of the territory,—the salubrity of the air—the common productions, and the returns of produce—the price of provisions—the wages of labour—the laws and form of government—the distribution of property, and the administration of justice, cannot fail to be, at all times questions of importance, and hence, although I have not had an opportunity of acquiring minute or extensive information upon these subjects, I offer no apology for

laying before you the few observations which I have been able to make—assured that you will not deem them wholly devoid of interest.

An unfavorable prejudice has been imbibed respecting the climate upon this coast ; and a general opinion prevails, as well in the West India islands as in Europe, that these colonies are very unhealthy : but however the fact may stand, upon a comparison with the genial climate of Europe, it is certainly incorrect with respect to the neighbouring islands. Probably it is a prejudice that may date its origin from the earliest settling of the colonies ; being formed either from a superficial view of the low and muddy surface of the land ; or in consequence of sickness having prevailed among the settlers, at the time of first clearing the soil.

Low and flat countries are usually unfavorable to the health of man ; but the insalubrity does not result as a necessary consequence of this form of the land : other circumstances are required ; for unless these conspire, or, having conspired, if they are removed, the fact no longer exists. A low

country badly cleared, not well drained, and only brought into partial cultivation, will, no doubt, be unhealthy: but a low country so well cleared and cultivated as Demarara, will not be sickly, only because it is low. A broken or mountainous country may preserve its salubrity in great measure from its form, or the particular exposure of its irregular surface: but a flat and low country ever requires the aid of industry; and can only be made healthy by the unceasing toil of man: and, herein, is afforded a beautiful and striking example of the all-providing care of our great parent—Nature: she has made labour necessary to the well-being of man; and she causes the earth to bestow health as the consequence of his toil; but if he neglects the salutary exertions of industry, she compels the very fields, not only to reproach his indolence, but to punish him with sickness. She has even gone further; for, these fields which, bereft of his health-inspiring toil, will destroy him, she has particularly empowered to reward him with plenty and riches, if he denies them not the attentions which she has made necessary to the preservation of his health.

You will have collected some knowledge of the general appearance, and the state of cultivation of this coast, from the desultory remarks I have already sent you ; but as I find a few words upon these subjects, among my general notes, I shall transcribe them, with the others, and you may read them or not as suits your leisure. I have told you that on approaching these colonies from the sea, the land is not visible, until you come very near to the shore. The tops of trees only are seen ; which appear to be growing out of the ocean. Before the coast was brought into cultivation, the forest reached very near to the edge of the water, and from the land being low, it was frequently overflowed by the tides. Now, there is a cultivated territory, a mile and half in depth, between the ocean and the forest ; but this is so entirely flat, as wholly to escape the eye, and on sailing towards the coast, the trees still look as if they were growing within the edge of the sea.

Perhaps none but the plodding industrious Hollander would have attempted to settle such a country—where wood and water concealed every appearance of the land, and

seemed to bid defiance to all the powers of cultivation. Nor indeed were the early labours of the first settlers directed to this part of the coast. They sailed far up the rivers, and established the settlements upon their more elevated banks, at a distance remote from the sea; not venturing to devote their industry to the immediate borders of the ocean, until they were prompted to it by the enterprize of more adventurous planters from the British islands.

The whole of the territory now brought into cultivation upon the coast, is *made-land*. It has been placed—I had almost said created, by the hand of man; and is only preserved to his use by constant toil. Numerous ditches and canals are cut to drain the water from the common surface; and the land that is planted, is only the mud and clay thrown out of these channels.

An estate, or plantation, usually consists of a long piece of flat land, about a quarter of a mile in width, and a mile and a half in depth, running back from the sea to the woods. It is bordered by wide ditches, and traversed by

numbers of others, and is thus formed into many separate divisions, somewhat resembling an assemblage of beds—such as are usually made in our English gardens, for the planting of asparagus.

A deep bank of earth, called a dyke, is thrown up in front, to defend the estate from the encroachments of the sea ; and a similar bank is raised at the back, to prevent it from being inundated by the waters, which overspread the flat surface of the forest. The ditches unite by frequent intersections, and from communicating with the sea, they are filled by the flowing, and emptied by the ebbing of the tide. Thus the estate undergoes, as it were, a daily draining, and all noxious and stagnant accumulations are prevented. In addition to these frequent washings, it is made one of the annual duties of the estate, thoroughly to scour out the ditches ; when the mud that is removed, forms a coating of manure, and serves to raise, while it enriches the soil ; which from cultivation, from the falling of heavy rains, and from the flowing of the tides in the numerous channels around it, were it not for this supply, would soon wear

to a level, and be again a prey to the encroaching waters.

From a number of these estates lying contiguous to each other, the coast is formed into an open, though narrow, territory, and the border of the sea swells into one splendid cotton field, a mile and half deep, and of nearly seventy miles extent. The surface being quite level, this immense track of cultivated land opens at once to the eye, and the scene is not less rich than novel. Perhaps a plain so spacious, a soil so fertile, and a produce so abundant, cannot be met with in any other country.

Like the soil in cultivation, the land which forms the public roads is only the mud and clay procured from the ditches that border them. They are of course flat, like the rest of the territory, and running at the bottom, or along the sides of the estates, they form straight lines, and right angles, throughout the whole extent of the plantations, interrupted only by the wooden bridges which cross the numerous ditches and canals.

In allotting the land, a certain width of

territory between each two estates, is, with much wisdom, reserved to the colony, in order to form what are here termed colony paths. These not only serve as common ways, from the front to the back of every plantation, but in each of them is cut a public canal, which runs from the sea, throughout the whole depth of the cultivated land, to the forest. By this provision many useful purposes are answered :—the public convenience is promoted, and each individual planter is benefited.

The colony path not only offers itself as a common road, from the sea to the bush, but preserves a free communication for any future settlers, who may engage in the cultivation of land at the back of the present estates : while the canal, by means of flood-gates, lets off to the ocean, the water that lodges in the forest, and prevents it from overflowing the cultivated fields ; bringing at the same time, a supply of fresh water, for the use of the negroes and the cattle ; and affording to the planters a ready means of conveying the produce of their estates to the sea.

Although the general face of the colonies be such as to convey an unfavorable impression, the peculiar mode of cultivation protects them from the ills, which, upon a first view of the soil, might seem to be threatened. From the frequent use of the hoe, in clearing the crops, scarcely a weed is left to grow up and decay ; from the numerous channels, which intersect each other, the rain that falls is carried off, without becoming stagnant ; from the flowing of the tide, every thing noxious, brought to the ditches, is speedily removed ; and from an annual scouring, the channels are kept peculiarly free from impurities ; hence, notwithstanding that it is flat and low, the soil which is brought into cultivation is not suffered to grow swampy : no offensive accumulation is formed ; nor does the mud-impregnated water of the ditches remain to grow putrid, and emit unhealthy vapours. The soil is always fresh ; the channels are free, and the waters frequently renewed ; it consequently follows that the evils, which commonly proceed from low and neglected ground, are in a great measure prevented.

When I mentioned as one of the advantages of the public canals, that they furnish a supply of fresh water for the slaves and the cattle, I might have added, that the paucity of good fresh water is one of the greatest inconveniences that is known in these colonies ; for although the canals bring fresh water in plenty, it is so strongly impregnated with infused leaves, and other vegetable matters, in consequence of coming from the forest, that it is very unpleasant, both to the eye and the palate, and as the negroes express it “ *no good for Backra,*” although these poor beings are, themselves, obliged to share it with the cattle.

The river water is brackish to the distance of many miles from the coast : springs there are none ; and wells would only supply a water which could not be used. Thus circumstanced, the expedient of preserving the offerings from the clouds naturally suggested itself ; and accordingly, tanks, or cisterns, have been constructed for this purpose at almost every estate. Some families preserve the rain water in large earthen jars, in which, with much care, it is kept good during the whole

period of the dry season. Those who are not possessed of either jars, or cisterns, are obliged to content themselves with the strongly macerated infusion of the forests, called “ bush-water ;” or to send parties many miles, with boats and casks, to obtain fresh water from the distant streams of the rivers.

You will imagine from the nature of the land, that the crops upon this coast must be very abundant. They are so in fact ; and are far more regularly productive, than in any others of our settlements in the West Indies. These colonies likewise possess the great advantage of being free from hurricanes and earthquakes, and from that mischievous insect, the borer, which in the islands so often destroys the canes. They are also exempt from great droughts, which are so frequently injurious to the islands, and, in consequence of being open to the breeze, they are less liable to frequent and sudden changes of temperature :—neither hills, nor rocks, nor woods offer any impediment to the grateful trades, which kindly come to them from the ocean, and are scarcely ever absent throughout the whole annual circle.

The year is commonly divided into two wet and two dry seasons. The long wet season begins in April, declines in August, and ceases in September. The roads are then dry, and the weather fine until the middle of November ; when the short wet season sets in, and continues till January. From the middle of January until the latter end of April, the weather is dry, the atmosphere clear and pure, and the climate bright and genial. The roads are then good, the breeze is steady and powerful, the air comparatively cool, and the temperature subject to little variation.

In these colonies laws are made, and acts passed by the governor and council—the governor having two votes.

The members of council are chosen by keizers, or electors ; these being appointed by the inhabitants—each inhabitant, possessed of property, to the amount of six hundred guilders per annum, being entitled to a vote.

To qualify a person for being elected a member of council, it is requisite that he be

a freeholder, and a protestant ; that he shall have resided three years in the colony ; and that he understand the Dutch language.

The council framing laws, is called a court of policy ; and this court is of a mixed form, resembling a combination of the house of assembly, and the governor and council of the British colonies.

The court of justice, like the legislative and executive, is composed of the governor, and of counsellors elected by the keizers. This court takes cognizance of all civil and criminal causes, and admits of no appeal, except to the Sovereign.

A commissary court is established for the adjustment of petty offences, and for the decision of all questions of property below the value of 600 guilders. This court consists of two members of the court of justice, who are appointed in rotation, the Governor nominally presiding. The fiscal is the active officer of this court. It is his duty to announce, or impose the fines ; but he has no power to levy

them. If they are resisted, he serves the parties with a citation, and they appeal to the commissary court.

The fiscal is the great law officer, and may be considered as the attorney and solicitor general of the colony. His powers and privileges are very considerable, and his influence, of course, extensive.

The country is divided into a certain number of districts, with a bürger captain appointed to each, on whom devolves the more immediate execution of the public regulations, whether made for the particular convenience of the respective districts, or for the common benefit of the colony at large.

It is a regulation—or call it a law of the colony, that each planter shall keep in repair that portion of the public road, together with its bridges, which crosses or passes at the end of his own estate. But instead of overseers, or surveyors of the road being appointed, it is made the duty of the fiscal, to travel throughout the colony, twice in every year,

for the exprefs purpose of infpe&cting the roads and bridges, and impofing fines upon the owners of fuch as are not found to be in good repair.

In thefe vifits of infpe&ction the law requires that he fhall be accompanied by a burgher officer, and a clerk from the government fecretary's office ; the former to approve, the latter to witnefs fuch approval, and to note the fines impofed. This control would feem to be highly neceffary, as certain proportions of thefe fines become the perquifite of the fifcal, and ferve to enrich his own purfe.

The planters, upon receiving notice of the fines, thus levied, have the privilege of refifting the payment of them : in which cafe the fifcal refers the queftion to the commiffary court, and himfelf pleads the caufe, as the principal law-officer of the colony. But it frequently happens, that by offering a third, or a half of the fine, the affair is compromifed—the fifcal filenced—his pocket fatisfied—and all further appeal to the Court of juftice prevented.

The regulation, has, however, the effect of keeping the public roads in very excellent repair; for, knowing how very improbable it is, that the least defect can escape the penetrating and interested eye of the fiscal, each planter is particularly attentive to the highways and the bridges *.

All grants of land, in these colonies, are made from the States General of the United Provinces; and they commonly consist of lots, either of 250, or 500 acres, laid out in the above mentioned regular form, which is favored by the situation, and flatness of the land. In front, towards the sea, each estate is about 1200 Dutch † feet in width; and in length, back from the sea into the forest, or

This regulation, which certainly had its advantages, has been found a source of cavil and vexation, and it has since been made an order of government that the fiscal should have his specific reward, and the whole of the fines be devoted to the ways and means of the colony. But it is to be feared, that this arrangement may make him less zealous in executing the duty, and that the roads and bridges may not, henceforth, be found in such excellent repair.

The Dutch weights and measures exceed by about $\frac{1}{12}$ part those of England.

bush 9000 feet. In Berbische many of the grants are 1800 feet wide, and 12,000 feet deep. On granting the land it is stipulated that the plantation shall be advanced to a certain state of cultivation by a given period, under the penalty of being forfeited at the expiration of that period, if not cultivated to the extent specified; and by way of encouragement to the planter, a second depth, further into the forest, of equal extent, and immediately at the back of the other, is usually granted to the person who holds the first depth from the sea, so soon as it shall be certified, by the two neighbouring planters, that two-thirds of the first grant are brought into good cultivation, and that the new grant will not be in any wise injurious to them. Some gentlemen are now in possession of these double plantations of 18,000 feet; but, for the most part, only the single estates of 9000 feet are yet made obedient to the hoe.

Thus you will perceive, that these rich colonies are merely a narrow strip of land, upon the border of the Atlantic Ocean, bounded by a deep forest, which extends

across the whole continent to the Pacific Ocean.

The Dutch upon originally establishing the settlements, as I have already said, cultivated only the banks of the rivers, and until within the last twelve or fifteen years, scarcely any plantations were formed upon the coast. It is since this period that English adventure has taught the plodding Hollander that he had overlooked his best interests, in not bestowing his industry upon the immediate border of the ocean; and the sea shore already exhibits one rich and fertile field, nearly throughout the whole extent, from the river Demarara to the river Berbische.

It is now believed that, in the course of a few years, the borders of the rivers will be totally abandoned, and, instead of being enriched with coffee and sugar, will be left a prey to the wild woods. In such event a very short time would efface every mark of human industry, and strangers would be unable to discover that the arm of man had ever extended thither; for so rapid is the progress

of vegetation, that the land is only held subservient to useful purposes by the unremitted toil of slaves, which being once withdrawn, it would speedily revert to its original wildness, and again become a part of one vast and savage forest.

The colony of Berbische was the first settled; but that of Demarara has proceeded with far the most rapid improvement. The number of estates now in cultivation upon the sea-coast, from the Demarara river to the border of the colony of Berbische, is one hundred and sixteen; all of which are planted with cotton, except the "Kitty" belonging to Mr. T. Cuming, which has been recently planted with sugar*. This part of the colony is divided into four districts, the Burgher Captains, presiding over which, are all British planters, viz.: Mr. Lochland Cuming, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Telfer, and Mr. Sutherland.

It were scarcely necessary to remark to you that coffee, cotton, and sugar are the

* Since these notes were written the number of estates has much increased, and several that were only planted with cotton, now produce the most luxuriant crops of sugar.

great, and almost only commercial productions of the colony. The average produce of the 80 best cotton estates, is calculated at from 50,000lb. to 60,000lb. weight, each, of cotton per annum. In the cultivation of this plant *one prime negro* is considered as sufficient stock for *two acres* of land. The average number of cotton bushes, planted upon an acre, is six hundred. Each bush is calculated to produce eight ounces of cotton; and the average price of cotton, sold in the colony, is estimated at fifteen stivers per pound.

The requisite proportion of stock, for an estate cultivated with coffee, is *two negroes* to *three acres* of land. The number of coffee bushes usually planted is four hundred and fifty per acre. Each bush is calculated to produce 1 lb. of coffee—and the average price, when sold in the colony, is from seven to eight stivers per pound.

The cultivation of sugar is the most expensive, and requires considerably the greatest proportion of stock—one *prime negro* being necessary to *every acre* of land. The average

return of an estate, planted with sugar, is 50l. sterling per acre, being 2000l. weight of sugar at four-pence per pound, and rum in proportion.

The domestic fowls and animals seen in these colonies are the same as those of Europe, but we find that the Moscovy duck, and the Guinea fowl are much more commonly used than in England. Only very few of the birds, or beasts of the surrounding woods, have yet been domesticated, and these, not for the purpose of utility, but amusement — the monkey and parrot tribes being almost the only species seen about the houses. The horse, the sheep, the dog, and the other animals which are usually associated with the family circle, and made subservient to man, are not the native inhabitants of these forests; but, possibly, there may be others which might be brought into social habits, and made to contribute to our wants. Domestic birds it is known there are; for we occasionally see, in that state, the native ducks of the rivers, and what is here called the *powys*, or turkey of the woods, which is a more stately bird, and

nearly as large as the common turkey of Europe.

With respect to the Natural History of the country, a wider field seems to be opened in botany and zoology, than in mineralogy, for while the animal and vegetable worlds are abundantly stored, scarcely such a thing as a stone or a pebble can be found in any part of the colonies yet cultivated. I lament exceedingly that my occupations will not allow me more time to devote to these subjects; and, on this ground, I have particularly to regret being separated from my baggage, having left behind me two large boxes of books, the loss of which I feel very severely.

Delightful as the study is, perhaps no extensive progress can be expected to be made in the different branches of the natural history of the country, so long as it shall continue to be visited only from views of pecuniary gain. Even the enthusiasm which attaches to new discoveries, can induce but few to toil in such a climate, in the mere pursuits of science; and, accordingly, we see that it is the object

of those, who do hazard their persons, to devote themselves to the means of acquiring a competent fortune, to enable them to retire, as speedily as possible, to enjoy the fruits of it under a more temperate sun.

It is not only with excessive heat and disease that those who visit these regions have to contend! The extreme annoyance, from whole tribes of insects and reptiles is even less supportable, to many, than the exhausting warmth of the climate. In truth I may say it is so to myself, for the general buzzing, the biting, stinging, creeping, and crawling of these tormenting objects, distress me far more than the heat, or any apprehension of disease. We are bitten, stung, or overrun by day, and by night, and exposed to incessant pain and discomfort, unless constantly upon the watch, or carefully protected by some defensive covering; being perpetually beset with myriads of flies, ants, musquitoes, cockroaches, lizards, JackSpaniards*, fire-flies, centipedes, &c. &c.; which, in addition to their bites and stings, fly in our faces, crawl about our persons, and

A large species of wasp.

make an intolerable buzzing in our ears. In an evening, and particularly after rain, the confused noise of these humming hosts is very peculiarly disagreeable. It conveys the idea of breathing in an atmosphere of sounds, or amidst one great and animated hive, where every created insect joins in full chorus—the enormous frog of the country croaking the base, in a voice which resembles the loud bellowings of an ox.—Vastly agreeable, methinks I hear you exclaim, for any one troubled with nervous sensations, or what are vulgarly called the fidgets !

From the great fertility of the soil ; from the uninterrupted regularity of the crops, and their abundant produce ; and from the immense extent of territory capable of being brought into cultivation, these colonies may be regarded as the most valuable capture which has yet been made during the war, and perhaps that which it might be most to the advantage of England to preserve, to herself, upon the return of peace.

The number of slaves, at this period, in the united colony of Essequibo and Dema-

rara, is fifty-five thousand *. The greatest number possessed by any individual is nearly 2000. These are the property of Mynheer Boode, a planter living upon the western coast of the Demarara river; a man of immense fortune, who is said to have been originally a drum-boy, in the Dutch service, and to have come to this colony from Surinam, whither he had arrived with the troops from Holland. Here, by a steady perseverance in successful industry, he has been enabled to acquire a fortune, which is represented as princely indeed; it being said to amount to nearly 50,000*l.* sterling, per annum.

Of the daily wages of labour it were difficult to speak, with any degree of accuracy, in a country where the work is done by slaves. I have already mentioned to you an instance of the exorbitant price of wages among the labouring class of carpenters, and this may serve as a specimen of the rate of hire given to others. The lower classes of white people are mostly mechanics, or artisans, and these obtain high and extravagant wages in all

Already increased to upwards of 80,000.

parts of the West Indies. White labouring peasants, or husbandmen, are here unknown. The mulattoes, likewise, are, for the most part, bred to some handicraft employment, and very few of them are seen to toil their daily round in the field: the tilling of the land, therefore, and all the menial, and lower degrees of labour, are performed by the negro slaves, who themselves, equally with the implements of their toil, are the sole and disposable property of their masters; wherefore, in order to ascertain the wages of labour, it would be necessary to calculate the cost of the slave, his provisions, and clothing—the expence of the implements he uses—the risk of sickness, and of casualties—and the interest of money, and thence to draw the ratio of expenditure, or the sum employed to procure his daily toil.

But it sometimes happens that persons buy slaves, who have neither land for them to cultivate, nor any other means of employing them; they therefore let them out to hire, by the month or the year. Some even purchase negroes expressly for this purpose; and lay the foundation of their for-

tunes by selling the toil of Africans, who are thus made to sweat drops of gold for their owners, under the lash of other masters. The profit obtained from the labour of a slave, who costs about eighty pounds, is usually from twenty to twenty-two guineas per annum, all expence of food, and of medicines when sick, being defrayed, throughout the term for which he is engaged, by the person who hires him.

Upon making minute inquiry I understand that the hire of a negro may be fairly estimated at about two guilders for a single day ; if engaged for several weeks, at one guilder per day ; and when hired for a longer period, it may be rated at about 250, or nearly 300 guilders per annum.

The compensation of professional labour bears a due proportion to the high profits acquired by the merchants and planters. From the population being very limited, and the inhabitants not yet crowded into towns, the medical practitioners are seldom rewarded with regular fees for their attendance ; but

are commonly allowed an annual salary for their services—thus establishing a kind of fixed income, which depends upon the number of estates regularly under their inspection, and not upon the number of sick, whom they may have to visit.

PRICE OF PROVISIONS

IN THE COLONY OF DEMARARA.

	Dollars.	Bits.	£.	s.	d.
Bread (rarely to be purchased)		1 per lib.	or	-	5
Pork	-	2½ do.	-	1	½
Beef or mutton (seldom to be procured)	3 or 4	do.	-	1	6
Milk (worse than in London)		1 per pint	-	-	5
Cheese (brought from England)		4 per lib.	-	1	8
Salt butter	-	4 do.	-	1	8
A Turkey	5 or 6		-	1	5 0
A Duck	-	12	-	-	5 0
A Fowl	1		-	4	8
Ham (brought from England)	-	4 per lib.	-	1	8
Loaf-sugar (coarse)	-	6 do.	-	2	6
Tea (green)	4½	do.	1	1	0
Apples (brought from America)	-	4 per doz.	-	1	8
Onions (do.)	-	1 do.	-	-	5
Small tarts (such as are sold in England for a penny)	-	1 each	-	-	5
Madeira wine	1	- per bottle	-	4	8
Claret	1	- do.	-	4	8
Porter	-	6 do.	-	2	6

PRODUCTIONS OF THE COLONY.

Plantains	1 or 1½ per bunch	-	-	5
Yams	1 per gal.	-	-	5
Eddoes	2 do.	-	-	10
Sweet Potatoes	1 do.	-	-	5
Oranges (brought to the door)	1 per doz.	-	-	5
Pines do.	2 for three	-	-	10
Indian corn	3 or 4 per 100 bushels	-	1	6
Grass (fresh cut, of which a horse will eat 5 or 6 bundles in a day)	1 per bundle	-	-	5
Cotton	3 per lib.	-	1	3
Coffee	1½ do.	-	-	7½
Sugar (fresh made in the country)	do.	-	-	4

ARTICLES OF COMMON USE.

	Joes. Dollars. Bits.				
A coat (ready made, and of very com- mod cloth)	2½	-	or	4	13 4
A shirt (ready made and coarse)	6	-		1	8 0
A hat	1	-		1	17 4
A pr. of boots (American, and of very bad leather)	7	-		1	12 8
A pr. of shoes (very bad)	3	-		-	14 -
A saddle (plain)	3 or 4	-		7	7 -
A Bridle (plain and neat)	17	-		3	19 4

Cabinet wares, and household furniture are extravagantly dear. All articles of iron, or polished steel soon become spoiled, in consequence of the sea air; hence it is common to have the hardware tinned or plated—Even keys, knives, cork-screws and the like, whether left in the room or worn in the pocket, are soon covered with rust, and without constant care, are rendered useless.

LETTER XXVIII.

Concerning the seasoning, or yellow fever.

April.

As you express a strong interest regarding the malady which has committed such afflicting ravages in our army, and desire to have a letter devoted exclusively to the subject, I now proceed to lay before you a summary, which, although it may not afford you any additional information, may serve as a recapitulation of what has been already transmitted to you, from time to time, in my frequent communications. I shall confine myself principally to what concerns the nature of the disease, feeling that a minute detail of the symptoms, and mode of treatment would not only be less interesting, but perhaps very tedious to you.

After all that I have been able to observe, with respect to this dread complaint, I think that, regarding it as a malady of the West India colonies, it may, correctly, be said to be the effect of climate, operating upon exotic

bodies. It is the fever of the country—an endemial malady, which attacks those, most severely, whose general vigour, and whose firmness, or density of fibre offer the strongest resistance. To look for it in ships and vessels, or to strain the eye across the ocean, in order to fix its birth-place upon the opposite coast of the Atlantic, or to trace its descent from the shores of the Indian seas, were to overlook the reality in search of a phantom.—It needs no foreign parent: the prolific earth is its mother,—its father the bright God who governs the day.

When Europeans first take up their residence in the West Indies, it is usual for them, sooner or later after their arrival, to undergo an attack of fever, which, in times of peace and tranquillity, when, as they are called, the “*new comers*” are but few, is termed a “*seasoning-fever*”—but, in times of war, when, from great multitudes arriving at the same period, its destructive effects are more striking, is baptized with the terrific name of—“*yellow fever* :”—but, whether denominated *seasoning*, *yellow*, *Bulam*, or *Siam*, or marked by any other appellation, it is only the common bilious

fever of hot climates: and it appears under an intermittent, a remittent, or a continued form, according to the soil and situation of the place; or the habit of body, and other circumstances of the person attacked. In negroes and creoles it is frequently an ague—in those who are in a degree acclimatés a remittent—and in *new-comers* a *continued*, or as it is commonly termed, a *yellow-fever*—preserving, in each case, a distinct type throughout its course; while, in other instances of its attack upon Europeans, it shifts its form, and runs its progress with the most uncertain irregularity: in proof of which I may remark that it has happened to myself to receive newly arrived soldiers into the hospital, at one and the same time, with this seasoning malady, under all the varieties of its intermittent, remittent, and continued form; and, although each has been differently attacked, all of them have died, in the course of only a few days, with every symptom of the most malignant *yellow-fever*.

Nature, in her all-preserving care, hath endowed the human frame with the power of accomodating itself to all the various climates,

upon the habitable regions of our globe; yet hath she more expressly adapted our organs to the particular climate in which she hath stationed us: so constituting the nice and delicate movements of the animal machine, that we cannot, without peril, expose ourselves to sudden or violent transitions.

To the inhabitants of different regions is given a something of constitutional difference, which it were difficult precisely to define: but it belongs to a certain original conformation, creating a difference of fibre or *humina*, which more particularly befits the body for the specific region, in which it is designed to move. Yet, while much is attributed to our parent Nature, it ought not to be forgotten that habit is our foster-mother, and that she follows nature very closely, in her influence upon the human frame; and hence it is that by long residence, and similarity of pursuit, so near an approach to this specific and original structure may be acquired, as to promote healthy action, in a being removed to a foreign, and even to an ungenial climate: still, this is only the yielding of a body originally different; for the assimilation is never so com-

plete as to be in all respects the same. The constitution of a negro from Africa, or the West Indies, never becomes entirely British, although he reside in England the greater part of his days: and however much an European, by long residence in the West Indies, be brought to resemble a creole, he can never acquire, precisely, the constitution of a native: some marks of original conformation will still remain, and a something, even in his general appearance, to distinguish him.

Nor is this difference of organization confined to the human subject: other animal bodies, and also vegetables differ in their structure and external appearance, in different climates. The wool of sheep, removed from a northern region to the West Indies, becomes hair: and the almost tasteless potatoe of Europe assumes a strong saccharine flavour from tropical culture.

The influence of the atmosphere, not only in different climates, but under its various changes in the same climate is, at all moments, and in all countries, far greater than common opinion supposes: nor has the attention of

medical men been sufficiently directed to this circumstance, although it is of great magnitude. Hypochondriacs, persons subject to rheumatism, or asthma, and those afflicted with painful thickenings of the cuticle, (usually termed corns,) become exquisitely sensible of the slightest variations in the state of the atmosphere; and from hence it may be concluded, that it cannot but operate, at all moments, with a powerful effect upon the tender fibres of our delicately organized vessels; and if, in our native region, the influence be so considerable, how infinitely important must it be, when the body is exposed to the stronger impressions of an unnatural climate

“.....where the sun, with downward torrid ray,
Kills with the barb'rous glories of the day.”

Without entering more minutely into the subject, which might swell my letter into a volume, suffice it to remark, that there appears to be a certain gradation in the tone, or firmness of the animal fibre, as we proceed from the hotter through the more temperate regions; not following in exact mathematical proportion, but sufficiently manifest to form some

standard for general observation ; and, perhaps, sufficient to sanction the assumption that the density or laxity of the human fibre bears an intimate alliance with the temperature of the climate, with respect to heat or cold ; although it may be influenced, likewise, in no inconsiderable degree, by other circumstances ; such as the dryness or moisture of the atmosphere, the state of the soil, the manner of clothing, and the habits pursued. In the colder regions towards the poles, the fibre is firmer, the circulation of the fluids slower, and the secretions more languid ; while in the warmer regions, near the equator, the fibre is lax, respiration quicker, the circulation more rapid, and the secretions more copious, and more speedily performed. In order, therefore, to fit the constitution of a polar inhabitant for a tropical climate, or to accommodate the system of a tropical inhabitant to a polar atmosphere, it is needful that the change should be gradual, that the necessary density or laxity be induced, with as little risk as possible of disorganization, and consequent dissolution*.

It is probable that our troops might be rendered nearly as effective for service in the West Indies, as in Europe, were it possible, in all cases, to prepare them for

It not only happens that the inhabitants of cold climates suffer, on being transferred to the tropical regions—the negroes can as ill support the change to a northern atmosphere, and accordingly they are frequently the victims of being brought to Europe; for, amidst the cold of our winter, all their energies seem to be destroyed, and their faculties benumbed. They seldom live to old age, but, commonly, sink into marasmus, or are cut off by early consumption.

Fever, excessive heat, violent passion, or any other cause which greatly, and suddenly hurries the circulation of the fluids, diminishes the tone and energy of the living animal fibre, and deprives it of that degree of firmness which is necessary to health; but, by gradually habituating the body to the change, a high degree of increased circulation, or a considerable diminution of the original density of fibre may be supported, without any consequent

the climate by slow and gradual approaches; as for instance, by first letting them serve, for a time, at Gibraltar, and afterwards employing them, for a year or two, in the more windward islands, such as Barbadoes or Antigua, before they were sent upon duty to the other colonies.

derangement of structure—the increased action of the vessels, the augmented velocity of the fluids, and the subsequent laxity of fibre, induced by great heat, or high fever, may be borne, provided they are not so sudden, nor long continued, as to cause disorganization.

We have many familiar examples which testify the effect of original conformation, and the powerful influence of habit upon the animal body, with respect to its state of health or disease. If a person accustomed to live in the gloom of London should expose his face, for only a short time, to the full rays of a Brighton sun, the skin would be separated as if by the application of a blister; but if a hardy shepherd of the downs were to lie upon the hills, with his face open to the broad sun, throughout the whole day, not the smallest part of the cuticle would be disturbed.

A negro, to whom the climate is congenial, can run over the hills in the West Indies, for many hours together, without suffering the slightest inconvenience: but if an European of more unyielding fibre, and but lately arrived within the tropics, were to fol-

low him in such a course, it would be more than probable—it would be almost certain, that, within a few succeeding hours, a fever would complete the disorganization, and send him to the grave.

So, the fluids of a racer may be hurried violently through his vessels, without any injury to the natural organization : but if an unpractised horse, of a different original conformation, were to be taken from the cart and made to gallop, with all possible speed, over a course of four or six miles, it is probable that from the increased impulse, and the resistance of his unaccommodating fibre, fever, disorganization, and death would speedily ensue.

In cold or temperate climates, bulls are baited, and hares hunted, in order that the sound texture of their fibres may be broken down, and the muscles made tender, by their dying in the fever of increased and violent circulation.—This is a fact so well known to all sportsmen, that a hunted hare is always preferred to one that has been shot, or taken by other means.

Epicures let their meat hang after it is killed, until the atmosphere has effected the same purpose, by a different process, and it be made tender by a decomposition, or partial putrefaction. But in the West Indies, it is common to see the animal alive in the market, and to have its joints smoking upon table the same day at dinner : it is slaughtered, dressed, and eaten, without the flesh growing cold ; and yet there is no complaint of the meat being hard or tough.

These remarks will serve to lead your attention more particularly to the subject of climate, and to the effects of habit and original conformation ; therefore, without attempting to enter more particularly into all the various changes, which the febrile action produces in destroying life, or the specific mode in which these changes are effected, I may proceed to state a few other general circumstances, which will shew the application of what has been already said to the subject in question, viz.—the continued, or *yellow* fever.

Creoles and negroes are not subject to the fever in its continued, or most malignant

form ; but, when it does invade them, it more commonly assumes a remittent or intermittent type.—In these classes the original conformation, aided by a constant exposure to the heat and atmosphere of these regions, has established a due state of fibre, and given to the body a certain congeniality which empowers it to continue its healthy action, amidst all the circumstances of climate and situation.

Europeans, who have resided during a period of several years in the West Indies, are seldom attacked with the fever in its continued form ; but when it seizes them, it commonly assumes the type of a remittent.—In persons of this class, the body, from long exposure to the climate, has become creolisé or acclimaté, approaching to the conformation of the natives, by having the original firmness of fibre reduced to the appropriate standard for continuing the healthy action, under exposure to preternatural heat.

The strongest men—those of the most dense or rigid fibre are most subject to the high degrees of the continued, or *yellow* fever ;

and are most frequently, and most rapidly destroyed by it.

Women, children, convalescents from former malady, and those who have been reduced by the use of mercurial remedies are less frequently the objects of its attack; and when it does seize them, it is commonly milder, and less rapid in its progress.—In these classes, the state of the animal fibre, either from original conformation, or from eventual circumstances, more nearly approaches to that of the creoles and natives.

In North America, the inhabitants, who constantly reside in the most southern states, are seldom attacked with the fever in its more violent, or continued form; while those of the north-east states are destroyed by it in great numbers: but, even in these states, it is remarked that the fever more readily seizes strangers from Europe, or peasants from the interior provinces, than the natives of the towns, in which the disease prevails.—These facts are peculiarly striking, and they seem to admit of ready explanation. • The inhabitants of the southern states, from residing in con-

stant heat, are acclimatés, and, in constitution, approach nearly to the creoles or natives of the West Indies : but those residing in the more northern states, although exposed to a very high degree of heat during the summer, can never become creolisés, on account of the intervening winter, which, annually renews the predisposition, and creates a susceptibility of the disease—still, from residing, during part of the year, in excessive heat, and remaining, at all times, in the atmosphere of their towns, even the inhabitants of the place, where the disease prevails, are, in some degree, less susceptible of the most malignant form of the fever, than strangers from Europe, or peasants from the provinces, whose more dense and rigid fibre renders them in a peculiar manner predisposed.

From these remarks, it would seem that the presence of contagion, is in no degree, necessary to the production of this fever. Indeed its invasion is governed by circumstances very opposite to all the known laws of contagion : for, in proportion as the body approaches the creole structure, so is it able to support the change of temperature, and to

resist the fatal effects of the seasoning malady. If the constitution, either from natural organization, or from long residence, be assimilated to the climate, *i. e.* if it be reduced to the common standard of the creoles, it has nothing to apprehend from the disease:—but if it be not, the fever will, assuredly, make its attack, without waiting for any such cause as contagion.

Moreover, if it can be ascertained, that certain classes, of people are most liable to be attacked, and if it can be proved that there is a certain gradation, according as they have been more or less exposed to the influence of climate, it were equally unnecessary and unphilosophical to call in the aid of a power, the application of whose laws it were impossible to reconcile with the appearances observed. No disease of known contagion is influenced by the circumstances which are, daily, seen to govern the progress of the yellow fever; if, therefore, we are to regard contagion as the parent of this disease, it must be a contagion of a very uncommon and peculiar appetite; for it is a circumstance, both singular and unprecedented, that an active and wide-spreading

contagion, prevailing in any particular country, should, expressly, avoid the inhabitants of that country, and only lie in wait for strangers; and, further, that should these not chance to arrive, even for many years, this insatiate devourer, not relishing the food of her own country, should not once require sustenance, nor stir abroad for support, but content herself to fast, throughout the whole period, and, again, rush forth, with undiminished vigour, the very moment that strangers appear! I think I might say, with the greatest correctness, that if no stranger, from a colder climate, should visit the West India colonies for the space of five, ten, or any given number of years, that no instance of the yellow fever, distinct from the bilious remittent fever of the country, would be known, during that period; yet, if a body of men, unaccustomed to the climate, should arrive from Europe, in the month of July or August immediately succeeding, a considerable proportion of them would be seized, and probably destroyed by this disease, before they had commemorated the first return of a new year: but can it be supposed that a most subtle and active contagion would thus remain latent, for any specified term, amidst

whole hosts of natives, suddenly, and as it were, impulsively, resume all its destructive powers, as soon as a body of more robust foreigners should come within its reach?

In England, the harvest-men and strangers, who go into the fens of Kent, or Lincolnshire in the Autumn, are more readily attacked with the endemial fever of these provinces, than the inhabitants, who constantly reside in the atmosphere which causes it; yet we do not learn that, during the prevalence of any contagious malady in these districts, the contagion cautiously avoids the men of Kent or Lincolnshire, to lie in wait for strangers; nor, perhaps, will any physician venture to assert that the Kentish fever is produced by contagion.

It would seem more probable that the contagion of any particular country should regard the subjects of that country, in some degree, as her appropriate prey. The plica Polonica shuns not the people of Poland—nor the sibbins those of Scotland—neither have the yaws any disrelish for the creoles, or the Africans. But what seems most surprizing,

'is that this lady of choice appetite, who despises such common food, as the languid blacks of the West Indies, when she takes a sail down to America, as if her appetite were sharpened by the voyage, will, occasionally, condescend to feast upon a fine stout negro of the United States.

This is a fact, which is totally irreconcilable upon the principle of the disease proceeding from contagion.—The negro of the West Indies, from always living in a high degree of heat, has no susceptibility: but the negro of America acquires a predisposition from the recurrent cold of the winter. The fibre of the one is relaxed, and yielding—of the other dense and resisting.—In the same way it is explained why the inhabitants of Louisiana, Georgia, and the Carolinas, are less subject to the disease, than those of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York. Did the fever spread itself by contagion, we know of no cause why it should extend its ravages to the north instead of the south—why it should seize whites in preference to blacks—why prefer a robust European to a languid creole;—nor why it should have a distaste for the sable race of the

West Indies—yet relish the negroes of North America.

It is not a law of contagion to make its attack upon the most robust and vigorous people:—more commonly it assails those of tender fibre. Were any given number of strong healthy men, and the same number of children to be exposed, at the same time, to the influence of the contagion of small-pox, measles, or scarlatina, common observation informs us that the children would be found to be most susceptible of the impression, and attacked in the greatest number: but the very reverse of this would be the case were they to be exposed, in a similar manner, to the cause producing the yellow fever—the men would be found to be most susceptible, and a greater proportion of them would fall victims to the disease.

Not only does this fever attack Europeans, newly arrived in the West Indies, in preference to creoles, negroes, and those who, by a long-continued residence, have become acclimatés; but even among these unhappy Europeans, who chance to suit her appetite,

she still has her partialities ; for the most healthy and robust, and in general, those who are the earliest subjected to great exertions, and the high degrees of temperature, are sooner seized, and more rapidly destroyed, than those of laxer fibre, or those who have the opportunity of becoming more gradually acclimatés.

But the “ New-comers” if exposed to the yaws, the cra-cra, or any other disease of decided contagion, are not found to be more susceptible than the créoles, or the negroes : although, with regard to the bites of musquitoes and other insects, the difference of effect upon the Europeans, and the people of the climate, is as peculiarly marked, as it is with respect to the yellow fever. The small puncture made in the skin of a robust European by a musquito, or a sand fly, frequently becomes inflamed, tumefies, breaks into a sore, spreads into a malignant ulcer, and, ultimately, robs the hardy son of the North of his life—while the languid creole, or the negro, quietly lets the insect bite, without apprehending any of this sad train of consequences.

Seeing that the fever can, unquestionably, be produced without contagion, some contend that, in its passage through the body, it generates a matter, which is capable of producing the disease, by being diffused in the atmosphere, and that it, thus, becomes infectious. But even in this widest sense of the term, I cannot consider it to be either a contagious or infectious malady; for it does not appear that, by any inherent process, the living human body has the power of generating the appropriate *pabulum* necessary for the production or support of this fever; or that the disease, in its progress through the human frame, begets a poison *sui generis*, which may be conveyed from one person to produce the disorder in another.

The contagious or infectious fever which proceeds from distempered human exhalations, is a distinct malady. The yellow fever has a different origin—is different in its symptoms—and requires a different mode of treatment. They both have their different degrees, and the mild typhus, and typhus gravior of England are not more alike than the continued and the remittent fever of the West

Indies. Perhaps the mild, and the confluent small-pox are more unlike : yet no one denies that either is small-pox—nor doubts that both are derived from the same cause—the same specific virus.

If the medical attendants, and the (white) orderlies, who have been employed in the hospitals, have suffered from the fever : still, they have only suffered in common with the officers and soldiers, who have not been quartered near the hospitals ; and, as their proportion of duty and fatigue has been uncommonly great, it were not to be expected that they could escape better than their comrades.

But I have said that this fever does not attack the blacks of the West Indies ; I may, therefore, mention a remarkable fact, which, more than all others, would seem to militate against the doctrine of the yellow fever being, originally, a contagious, or becoming, in the course of its progress, an infectious malady, viz.—that, of the multitudes of black men and women, whom I have had occasion to see employed constantly in the hospitals, and who have executed all the

menial duties about the sick, the dying, and the dead, I never yet knew even a *single instance* of any one of them either male or female taking the disease: Perhaps no one will contend that this would have happened had the hospitals been equally crowded with patients in small-pox, measles, scarlet fever, the common jail fever, or any complaint decidedly infectious *

The yellow fever prevails most com-

* In the year 1793, a body of emigrants from St. Domingo, amounting to upwards of 300 in number, who had made their escape from that colony, under all the circumstances of the most afflicting depression, arrived at Philadelphia, at the time when the yellow fever raged with its utmost malignity: yet, not one of them was attacked with the afflicting malady, which was then desolating the town. And, as if expressly to make this fact the more striking, it likewise happened that the emigrants who arrived at the same distressing period, from Ireland, the States of Germany, and other parts of Europe were attacked by the fever, even in greater proportion than the Americans themselves.—It is not the property of any contagion to exhibit such marked partialities. The autumn temperature of Philadelphia was congenial to the emigrants from St. Domingo: they were acclimated, and therefore not susceptible of the disease; while those from Europe, being the inhabitants of colder regions, were in a peculiar degree predisposed.

monly, and most extensively, at the decline of the wet season of the year, when the rains and the sun irregularly alternate, and cause unsettled weather ; and this is also the period when the bilious remittent, and the ague appear among the creoles and negroes. In the midst, or at the very height of the wet season, and during the finer dry season, the fever, in all its shapes, is far less common : likewise in the dry and elevated parts of the country, which are open to the breeze, it is out of all proportion less frequent than in low damp situations, in the vallies, and about the openings of the rivers. In North America it is principally, nay almost exclusively a disease of the low and crowded towns, situated upon the borders of the rivers, and the bays of the sea ; and is scarcely known in the higher, or more interior parts of the country.

The great favoring circumstances, therefore, appear to be a high degree of temperature, and a moist state of the atmosphere ; to which may, perhaps, be added the ill chosen situation of the towns : but, from the particular season in which it spreads its ravages, and from all the host of concomitances,

it would seem that we are to regard some miasma, or unwholesome exhalation, as the true *pabulum* of the disease.

At the high period of the wet season the ditches and canals are full, and the brooks and rivulets fluent, so that the noxious exhalations are neither so readily formed, nor so easily taken up into the atmosphere; and, in the dry season, these deadly vapours are either chased away by the breeze, or rendered effete by the intense rays of the sun—but during the intermediate period, at the decline of the wet season, every circumstance tends to favor their production, and to promote their diffusion and suspension in the surrounding air.

The fever is most readily generated in new colonies, where the land is only partially cleared of its wood, badly cultivated, and the half-drained soil left to exhale its noxious vapors into the surrounding atmosphere. In the older colonies, where the forests have been long cut down, the land brought under general cultivation, and its surface more opened to the breeze, it is found to be less prevalent,

Examples of this are seen in the old islands of Barbadoes and Antigua, contrasted with those of Grenada and Trinidad. The former are well cleared, and universally tilled, and from situation, as well as culture, freely exposed to the influence of the trade wind ;—in these, the disease but very seldom appears. The latter are not yet brought under general cultivation, but are partially covered with wood, and the atmosphere is damper, and less purified by the breeze :—here, the fever frequently and fatally rages.

In new settlements where the land is recently brought into cultivation, and not well cleared, or drained, and particularly in the vicinity of the towns or habitations, which are commonly placed at the lowest, and most insalubrious spots, for the convenience of commerce, the drainings of the higher lands, and often the filth of rivers, or of bays and inlets of the ocean, together with decayed leaves, plants, and roots, and, in short, the whole *exuviae* of the vegetable world collect, remain, and grow putrid, and, in such situations, the very weeds, and coarser plants, become rank and exuberant, and, growing up only to decay, add to

the fermenting mafs, which, by holding the impure waters ftagnant, accumulates and creates a noxious fwamp; and, thus, is generated the hideous Python, who, though often conquered by the darting rays of Apollo, again uplifts his deadly front, and can only be fubdued by the more fteady and perfevering induftry of man.

When the effect of climate and fituation fhall be fully underftood, and duly eftimated, the yellow fever may be no longer the fcourge of our merchants, our planters, and our armies: yet, after the long and fatal experience the world has had, it is equally lamentable and furprizing that men fhould ftill blindly continue in error, with refpect to the fituations chofen for their towns and dwellings. Contrary to their better knowledge, they prefer the convenience of commerce to the more important advantages of health, and fix their habitations, as it were exprefsly, upon the moft unhealthy points of the globe. In every nation, and almoft every colony, ftriking examples might be felected of the ftange folly and neglect with which we regard a circumftance of fuch ferious magni-

tude. Armies, perishing with fever, or dysentery, have been snatched from threatened destruction, by change of situation; and countries, almost meriting the reproachful term pestilential, have been rendered salubrious by attentions to the soil: still, on the score of health, much remains to be done, by mankind fixing their residence where the atmosphere is least exposed to noxious exhalations. But alas! commerce, and her prostitute suite, riches, dissipation, and luxury, deafen the loud calls of the fair Hygeia, with her more virtuous train, ease, tranquillity and happiness; and while man remains ambitious, and wealth be made the public road to honors and distinctions in society, health will continue to be only a secondary object of his consideration. It is in the province of the physician to expose this fatal error—to philosophy it belongs to remove it.

I would remark that the fever of these regions seems, in many respects, to be governed by the same circumstances as the endemic fever of Kent and Lincolnshire, in England, and indeed when it attacks the natives of the country, it even assumes the same type and

symptoms: and I much suspect that if it could happen that the temperature of these provinces should continue as high as from 80° to 90° during the summer, and heavy rains should fall in July, you would have *yellow fever* in the months of August and September: but, while the general heat of the summer shall continue below 70° , there can be no fear of yellow fever being generated in England—and still less of it being imported; for this is just as improbable as that the Kentish fever should be carried off in a Scots trading vessel, and spread among the inhabitants of Edinburgh, whose rocks, and streams, and healthy mountains preclude its visitation.

In order to exhibit, in a more striking point of view, the similarity, or I might say the identity of the intermittent, the remittent, and the yellow fever of the West Indies, and to shew that they are only different degrees of the same disease, I may briefly enumerate the more prominent points in which the resemblance is observed.

1. They run indiscriminately into each other—a quotidian, or a remittent, sometimes

becoming a malignant yellow fever; and a yellow fever sometimes degenerating into a remittent, or an intermittent.

2. They are all seen to be connected with a derangement of the biliary system; and a common sequel of each, is a chronic affection of the liver.

3. They all prevail, most extensively, at the same period of the year; viz. the decline of the wet season.

4. A bilious vomiting is common to them all.

5. They are all, occasionally, attended with a yellowness of the skin, and the eyes.

6. In their relapses, and frequently in their first attack, they all bear a close alliance with the lunar periods.

7. The intermittent, the remittent, or the continued type, or in other words, the milder, the intermediate, or the more malignant form is assumed, according to the state

of vigour, the period of residence in the climate, and other circumstances of the subject attacked.

8. They all, occasionally, affect the same person various times.

With respect to the alleged novelty, — the recent production or importation of the yellow fever, it appears to be an error, which may be explained away, by the circumstance mentioned above ; viz. that during a period of peace and tranquillity it is less frequent, and passes under the milder name of seasoning fever ; but from recurring in a time of war, it creates new alarm, and consequently issues forth with a new appellation. Its existence is, no doubt, coeval with the discovery of the colonies ; for it is mentioned by some of the oldest authors who have written upon the subject of the West Indies, and is pointedly noticed by Pere Labat, an author who himself experienced an attack of it in the year 1694. Were it fit to offer a conjecture with regard to its duration, I might suggest that, in all probability, it will continue to prevail, so long as greedy lucre shall impel the inhabitants of

cold climates to pay their devotions to Plutus, by a pilgrimage to tropical fields ; unless these fields shall be so improved, by tillage, as to destroy the serpent, and deprive the fever of the aliment necessary for its support.

LETTER XXIX.

The commandant receives final instructions for the author to proceed to St. Domingo. A collection of Indian specimens embarked for England. News arrives of the defeat of the combined fleet off Cape St. Vincent — also of the invasion of Wales by 1500 Frenchmen. Hospital officers subsist upon salt rations. Author laments not being able to make an improved report respecting the surgical patients. Next to fever, ulcers most fatal to the troops. Different effect of the climate upon those newly arrived, and those accustomed to the country. Guiana not less healthy than the islands. Proportion lost not so great. Casualties during one year. Rain and lightening, frogs, thunder, and musquitoes imply the setting in of the wet season. The rainy season later in the islands than in Guiana.

Demarara, May 2.

THE die is cast! and I am irrevocably destined for St. Domingo. The commandant received the reply of the commander in chief on the 25th ult., and I am directed to take my departure from the coast of Guiana by the earliest opportunity. This may, therefore, be the last letter I shall ever address to you, from the continent of South America.

Anticipating these instructions I had prepared cases for my collection of Indian specimens ; which I have now packed up, and embarked on board the ship *Homer*, for London, hoping some day to meet them again in the neighbourhood of Bedford Square. Fortunately, after long expectation, the model of an Indian house, which the friendly and hermit-like Bercheych had promised to procure me from the Bucks, arrived just in time to be enclosed—and as it is complete in furniture and utensils, I shall look forward with much pleasure to the period, when I may have the opportunity of explaining to you, in England, the appropriate uses of all the little apparatus which you will find attached to it.

I am also indebted to the commandant, Col. Hisslop, for the model of an Indian house, brought to him by the Bucks, which you will likewise find in the collection embarked on board the *Homer*.

We have just received the news of Sir John Jarvis having defeated a great fleet of the enemy, with a very inferior number of ships, off Cape St. Vincent. The guns have

been fired, and we all join in cordial rejoicings upon the occasion ; notwithstanding that the tidings come to us accompanied with the intelligence of an invasion of Wales . . . by *full fifteen hundred* Frenchmen ! What can be the object of such-like expeditions ? Is it hoped that these handfuls of men can diffuse themselves throughout the country, and delude Englishmen to forego their own freedom, in exchange for French slavery—or are they merely hordes of vile Brigands, vomited by the *great nation* upon our shores, instead of being consigned to the executioner ?

It has happened, for some weeks past, that we have again been very particularly indebted to the king, for our allowance of daily food. Unable to procure fresh provisions in the colony, and none having been imported, the hospital mess has been wholly fed with the salt rations issued from his Majesty's stores ; and, no alternative remaining, we have been compelled to satisfy ourselves with a diet of salt beef and pease soup, improved with the occasional variety of pease soup and salt-pork.

I should stand accused of neglecting our contract, were I to omit noting to you that, in a late provision-hunting excursion, our party met two Dutch ladies upon the road, travelling, with great state, in a chaise drawn by six naked slaves, instead of horses. This was quite a scene of novelty, it being one of the toils of slavery we had not before chanced to witness : nor indeed had we heard that it was practised.

It is matter of much concern to me not to be able to improve the report of our surgical patients, before I bend my path from these colonies, and from the hospitals, which have so long been the objects of my anxious care ; but, so far from this being the case, it is deemed necessary to embark another body of these unfortunate sufferers on board the ships now going to England.

Next to fever, ulcers have been the severest scourge of the troops, and in both of these maladies we have witnessed multitudes of instances, in sad proof of the fatal influence of climate upon our patients :—while an European has been cut off in a few hours, by that ardent, and merciless destroyer, the yellow fe-

ver, a colonist has experienced a slight attack of the bilious remittent, and a negro had to support the simple paroxysm of an ague : or, while an English soldier has lingered, and died, from only a slight scratch or excoriation, the African, and the creole, have rapidly recovered from the widest and most perilous ulcers.

If I state to you the result of twelve-months experience, as it now appears before me, in a return I have prepared for the commander in chief, it is not with a view of increasing your terrors, respecting the fatality of this climate, but rather of counter-acting, in your mind, a prejudice which I have already said prevails but too extensively, regarding the insalubrity of Demarara, and, generally speaking, of the whole coast of Guiana.

I observed to you before, that the commonly accepted opinion, that these settlements were more unhealthy than the West India islands seemed to be incorrect ; and if I now remark that in the course of a year our loss has amounted to nearly 350 men,

the returns from even the most favored of the islands, I have much reason to suspect, will bear me out in regarding the assertion as decidedly erroneous: for we are taught to believe that few, if any, of the detachments of the very numerous army, under the command of Sir Ralph Abercromby, have escaped with so little loss, as the division serving in these colonies. In some of the islands we know that the mortality has been frightfully greater—in few—perhaps in none, has it been less. Yet, alas! it is, at best, but a melancholy consolation, that we should find cause to rejoice in having lost only one-fourth of our number!

In the course of last week, and particularly on the 26th and 27th of the late month of April, we had many heavy showers of rain, accompanied with much thunder and lightening, also with the loud croakings of hosts of enormous frogs, and the distressful visitings of thick clouds of musquitoes; all of which are regarded as strong indications of a returning wet season. That the thunder and lightening have been less frequent, the musquitoes fewer, the breeze stronger, and the loud bellowsings of

the frogs less annoying, during the dry season, than they had been during the wet weather that preceded it, is a fact, to which the eyes and ears of all here can bear testimony ; but in how far these circumstances recurring with the showers of a lunar period, may be indicative of the returning invasion of the long wet season, I am not able to pronounce with equal certainty. Probability might seem to favor the opinion : yet the rains have again diminished, and the best observers do not positively declare our pleasant dry season to be at an end ; and, therefore, as the wet season is commonly later in the islands, than upon this coast, I do not altogether despair of reaching Martinique in time to see that island during the continuance of fine weather *

* Since writing these remarks, the author has had opportunities of seeing the yellow fever upon many different stations, and he may observe, that each occasion of increasing his experience has tended to confirm the opinion, which all the circumstances connecting with it, in Guiana, forced upon his mind, respecting the nature of the disorder. It has now happened to him to have seen this fever at Barbadoes—in the colonies upon the coast of South America—at Martinique—at Jamaica—at Cape St. Nicholas mole, and Port au Prince in St. Domingo—

and at Norfolk, upon the coast of Virginia, in North America, in all of which places, he has observed it to be one and the same disease, slightly differing in some of its features, according to circumstances of situation, of season, or of constitution. He has also seen much cause to believe, that early venæsection is the remedy most to be relied upon in the cure.

LETTER XXX.

Author's adieu. He takes his passage in a vessel bound for Martinique. Feels anxious to reach St. Domingo. Promises to continue the habit of guiding his pen to his friend, provided his "Notes" are duly honored.

Demarara, May 5th.

THE ship, which is to convey our surgical invalids, not having sailed, I gladly embrace the opportunity of offering you a word of kind adieu, before I take my departure. To-morrow I am to embark from this coast, together with such of the gentlemen of the St. Domingo hospital staff, who have been spared from the grave. The vessel, in which we have taken our passage, goes only to Martinique; how at what time we may proceed from thence to St. Domingo will, in all probability, depend upon circumstances, not within my control: but, for many reasons, I shall be anxious to reach the island, whither we are destined—hoping, there, to hail my comrades; to meet whole packets of long-expected letters from my friends in England; to regain my books and

baggage ; and to become settled in a regular routine of professional duty. When, or from whence you may hear of me again, is among the uncertainties with which I am surrounded :—but I shall continue to lift my pen to your idea, at the pensive hour of retiring to my birth for the night ; and if your valued remembrances shall tell me that you are not already tired of your correspondent—that he has not been too faithfully observant of your dictates — you may perhaps be troubled as heretofore : but, remember that this will rest entirely with yourself ; for I have a sad terror, lest I should draw more “ *Notes* ” than you may be willing “ *to accept.* ”

Adieu ! adieu !

F I N I S.

